

THE MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HENRY WILDER FOOTE
1838 - 1889

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C O N T E N T S

Chapter		Page
I.	THE STORY BEGINS	1.
II.	BOYHOOD.	11.
III.	A HARVARD UNDERGRADUATE.	18.
IV.	THE DIVINITY SCHOOL.	30.
V.	CANDIDATING AND CALLS.	42.
VI.	THE ACTIVE MINISTRY.	55.
VII.	THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS.	67.
VIII.	VARIED ACTIVITIES.	80.
IX.	HISTORICAL AND LITERARY WORK	89.
X.	GOING NEARER TO GOD.	100.

CHAPTER I

THE STORY BEGINS

When the ministry of Henry Wilder Foote was brought to an untimely end in the spring of 1889, many eulogies appeared in the press. In Boston and among his many friends elsewhere there was a feeling that a good and devoted pastor had been called away before his work had been finished. Yet there is no reason to suppose that any of those who knew and loved him ever considered writing more than a brief memoir about him. His was not the sort of life about which it is easy to weave a story, for it lacked those dramatic qualities, those striking events and that picturesqueness which make a biography easy to write and interesting to read. Here was a man who had lived quietly, going about his business without fuss or feathers, blind to fame and publicity, but a man who was entirely devoted to his work, his ministry of love and sympathy, of guidance and helpfulness.

Yet it is for this very reason that his life is worth recording. It is because it is not striking and dramatic, but rather overflowing with Christ-like love, that it serves as an ideal example of what the Christian ministry should be. All who knew him agree that his most outstanding quality was sympathy, a sympathy that was spontaneous and boundless, that healed and strengthened all who came to him in sorrow or in trouble. His type of character is not only rare in life, but rare in literature as well. Yet for those who wish to know of the heights to which the human personality can rise toward the Christ ideal of personality, the story of this life is worth knowing. Nearly all

those who knew this man personally have passed on, yet to those few that remain his memory is vivid. They remember little of what he did. They cannot forget what he was. If I can give to these pages something of his spirit, if I can recreate in part the picture of what he was, I shall have accomplished the goal that I desire.

If you could pull aside the curtain that hides the past for a moment, and look down upon the snowy streets of Salem some wintry morn of eighty-five years ago, perchance you would see a slight lad, not yet in his teens, hurrying from door to door. Though the sun's first rays would not even be lightening the eastern sky, this small newsboy would be at work, delivering his bundle of "Salem Gazettes". A victim of child labor, this, out so early on such a morning? Hardly, for had you stopped him he would have told you, in a frank, earnest way, that he was Harry Foote and that he delivered the papers because he wanted to.

"Are you, then, the son of the editor of the paper? You don't have to be a carrier to help support your family." Yes, it was indeed the son of Caleb Foote, who for so many years was the owner and editor of the "Gazette", and he was delivering the papers because he wanted to earn some money. "You see," he might have said, "I am starting a collection of coins, and that takes money. I already have quite a few from all over the world."

Who was this editor's son, the boy who was a paper carrier because he wanted to have a coin collection? Had your chance meeting with the boy aroused your curiosity, you might have wandered into the "Gazette" office that morning to make the acquaintance of his father, but it would have been better still if you had turned into Court Street and found the house of Daniel Appleton White, a former state senator, now about to close

his career as Judge of Probate. Judge White was the boy's grandfather, and was already in his middle seventies. He would have had more leisure than his younger, hard-working son-in-law, and perhaps would have welcomed you into his library for a chat. He was always glad to have a friend drop in to talk over all the events of current interest, and all new literary and scientific questions. With the help of sincere interest and a few agile questions, he might have told you many things about this youngster - who he was and where he sprang from. Let us "just suppose" that you succeeded in finding him in a talkative mood. Something like this would have been his story.

"So you met my young grandson? He is a very interesting young fellow, and very precocious too, although you may think me prejudiced. From a very early age he has been a reader, and I never saw such a lad for loving to hear stories. As a very little boy, before he could speak plainly, he would creep from his crib to his parents' bedside every morning asking for 'Doose! Doose!' meaning 'Mother Goose', which he almost knew by heart. This, mind you, at the great age of one and a half. Later he was more interested in exciting stories, stories of heroic deeds, of remarkable events in history, of strange animals. His reading now of mature books, although he is scarcely twelve, is far ahead of most boys of his age, and had you asked him, for instance, to repeat almost any part of Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome" when you met him this morning, he could have done so. Often enough he is very amusing, for he seems to have a special love of unusual, polysyllabic words, which he accepts at first hearing, and uses again himself at as early an opportunity as comes, even if he isn't sure of their meaning.

"Henry was born on the second day of June in 1838, and

Caleb and Mary named him after his great-uncle Henry Wilder, the brother of my first wife. He died while still no more than a youth, down in Guadeloupe. My wife, Mary Wilder, born just about the time of Washington's first administration, married a young West Indian planter named van Schalkwyck when she was twenty-one, and went with him to Guadeloupe. When they arrived, they found themselves in the midst of a native insurrection. With them had gone Mary's younger brother, Henry. Mary stayed in the West Indies for about two years, two years that were filled with a lifetime of adventure, romance and tragedy. Not many weeks had passed amid the throes of insurrection and bloodshed before both Henry and van Schalkwyck caught Yellow Fever and died. Mary herself caught the disease, but after a long illness she managed to recover. After her recovery her husband's family tried by every means in their power to keep her down there with them. They endeavored to get her to marry some other member of the family, and meanwhile intercepted all her letters from home. At last, however, she managed to break away and sail for Boston.

"She was living with her mother in Concord when I met her, a widow at twenty-three, and as lovely a person as ever lived. She was a lady of uncommon gifts and charm. We were married out in Concord in the spring of 1807, and I took her back to Newburyport to live. It was just about the time of the controversy raised by Dr. Morse about Dr. Ware's election to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard, and I remember well how strenuously I insisted that there was nothing in the conditions imposed by the founder making it necessary that the election should turn on sectarian grounds.¹

¹See the very interesting Memoir of Hon. Daniel Appleton White, by Rev. James Walker, for The Mass. Historical Society. 1863

"Our marriage, with its promise of so much happiness, was not of long duration. Soon I began to notice that her health was failing, but this hardly prepared me for the end, which came in 1811. But though she was gone, she left me at least one great source of joy - our two young daughters, Eliza and Mary.

"I had been elected to the Massachusetts Senate the year previous, and I recall how it grieved me to be away from my home so much during these first few years when my children needed a father's love. Besides, the government of the State had just passed into the hands of the Democratic party, leaving me in a helpless minority on all the great questions at issue.¹ But I did the best for my girls, and later, after my second marriage in 1819, we moved to Salem, to this very house, and I was able to give them a real home and a lady who was to them a mother.

"Harry's precocity comes from his mother, for Mary also learned to read at an early age. She seems to have the fortunate combination of her mother's rare loveliness of character and my love for a life among books. At twenty-five she married Caleb Foote, a young Salem boy who has had little formal education, yet, nevertheless, is a highly educated man. I really know far too little about his ancestors, but on the Foote side he is a member of the eighth generation in this country. Pasco Foote, the first of the family, came to Massachusetts back in 1635, I think. He was a seafaring man, and it was from the sea that the next six generations made their living. By the time of the first Caleb Foote, my son's grandfather, a considerable amount of property had been acquired, yet he, too, had the call of the sea

¹These were the exciting days of Embargo and Non-intercourse, of the Gerrymander and John Henry, and "Madison's War" and the Hartford Convention, in which White took an active part.

in his blood. During the Revolution he served under Washington at Cambridge, but soon after he went out on a privateer. In this patriotic enterprise he was less successful than many of his fellows, for shortly after the ship had put to sea it was gobbled up by a British man-o-war, and Caleb was carried to England, where he was placed in Forton Prison. After considerable hardship he managed to escape to France, and at last returned to Salem to find that his business affairs had suffered even more than he during his prolonged absence. After a short while at home, however, the war being over, he said good-bye to his wife and family and put to sea once more. But the fates were against this young adventurer, for he caught the Yellow Fever in the West Indies and died.

"Mary Dedman Foote, his wife, again was left to struggle along as best she could. Her son, Caleb, took to the sea at an early age. His career was even shorter than his father's, but with his ability he made it count. He was only thirty-two years old when he was lost at sea, but in that time he had become the master of a vessel and had married twice. His wives were two sisters, Martha and Nancy. Martha, as I remember it, died of consumption shortly after her marriage, leaving one little boy, the third Caleb, barely two years old. Then father Caleb married the younger sister, Nancy, but she passed away in 1808 at the age of twenty-one. It was in 1810, the year before my wife Mary went, that the father put to sea on that last disastrous voyage. He sailed in January, and it is supposed that his vessel sank during a fierce storm which occurred later in that month.

"As you can easily see, whatever family property there had been had by this time vanished because of the early death of both father and grandfather of my young son-in-law. The latter

was but a mere lad of six or seven when the second Caleb put to sea for the last time on that wintry January day. The sea took a heavy toll in those days, the sea and the fever. Not only did it bring about the death of my son-in-law's father and grandfather, but as well, if I recall, it cost the lives of his grandmother's, that is Mary Dedman's, father and brother, and his West grandfather.

"It was a poor family into which Caleb the third was born in February, 1803, for after his father was lost in 1810 there were no men left in the family. Caleb was brought up by his grandmother West. At the age of ten he left school to be shop-boy in his uncle's small grocery store, where his chief duty seems to have been the drawing of liquor by the glass for those who came into the shop for grog. Evil and vulgar though these surroundings were, he seemed to be little affected by them.

"Little enough love he received at home. He once told me of how one day he cut himself in the heel with a piece of glass. Although the gash was a long, deep one, he said nothing of it to the family when he returned home, but instead took a needle and thread and sewed it up as best he could himself.

"Other employment followed. For a while he was a kitchen-boy, then a shop-boy again, this time in a book store and bindery. When he was fourteen he felt the call of the sea, and decided to go if he could get a berth. But a kindly fate seemed to be watching over him. He was a slight youth, like his son whom you men this morning, and did not find it easy to secure employment. At last he discovered a Captain Upton who was picking up a crew for a sealing voyage into the Arctic. He needed a cabin-boy and agreed to take Caleb, but when Caleb returned the same afternoon to sign the papers he found that his place had been filled by

another. This disappointment proved to be the turning point in his career, for shortly after he found employment in the office of the "Salem Gazette" as an apprentice.

"During all these years of struggle and hardship Caleb had continued his own education, reading every book upon which he could lay his hands. His quiet and industrious habits made an impression upon the proprietors of the paper. His first task was setting the type of an Arithmetic book which they were printing, a task which he performed so ably that his employers found it hard to believe that he had not had previous training in a printing office. So incredible it was to them to have a boy in the office who preferred reading to idling and playing, that he immediately became a favorite and advanced rapidly.

"One day Mr. Cushing, one of the proprietors, was in the office when my old friend John Pickering, one of Salem's eminent scholars, dropped in to see him. It was a beautiful winter's day, one of those days when there had been rain followed by a freeze which left every twig in a glimmering casing. They were talking of the beauty of the scene, while Caleb, broom in hand, was busily sweeping near by. Mr. Pickering mentioned that there was a choice little piece of verse by some minor English poet which described just such a scene. Both wished that they could remember where it could be found. Without meaning to be impertinent young Caleb said that the poem of which they were thinking was the Epistle from Phillips to the Earl of Dorset, and that they could find it in a certain volume of the "Tatler".

"Naturally, such an incident made a great impression. Before he was twenty he found himself the right-hand man in the office; at twenty-two he was able to buy a half share in the concern, and at thirty he was the sole owner. It was during those

last years that I first made his acquaintance. He became a member of a little literary club to which I belonged. In fact, I think he was one of the original members, and the only one of us who was not a college man. He was better informed, though, than most who had had much greater advantages. About that time he delivered several speeches at the Salem Lyceum, which my daughter Mary and I attended, and it was about that time he met Mary, although perhaps that meeting was a little earlier, when both were teaching in the Sunday School of the North Church.¹

"It was some time before I realized that this young man had lost his heart to my daughter, for he was modest and fully aware of his lack of advantages, and most hesitant to ask for her hand. But at last the day came when, having screwed his 'courage to the sticking-place', he wrote me a note and came to see me. That was in 1835, when he was thirty-two and Mary was twenty-four. In the fall of the same year they were married in the First Church. After their marriage they moved into a house on Liberty Street, where their first child, Elizabeth, was born. Soon after they moved to the house on Brown Street where they have lived ever since. Poor little Elizabeth, their pride and joy, died there when she was scarcely one.

"In 1838 Caleb was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature, so they spent that winter in Boston. He left the "Gazette" to struggle along as best it could, though he did much of the work from a distance. This, of course, meant frequent trips back here by stage, as the railroad was still being built at that time. They had hardly more than returned to their Brown Street home in the spring when their first boy, Henry, was born, on Sunday morning

¹The First Church to which the Whites belonged had no Sunday School until some years later.

the second day of June, 1838. Soon thereafter they moved to 44 Warren Street, a house which Caleb had built."

As the old man pauses in his narrative, you suddenly realize that the winter sun has climbed already well into the southern sky, and that you have imposed too long upon his simple friendliness. With a warm handshake and a word of thanks, you leave the house on Court Street.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD

To children of this modern age of rush and roar, Old Salem of nearly a century ago would have seemed indeed a quiet, peaceful spot. Yet it was a city of imagination. There lived many distinguished families, the Pickerings, the Saltonstalls, the Bowditchs. There for a time lived William H. Prescott, John Prince, Joseph Story, Nathaniel Hawthorne. And still there were many of the men who had grown up during the brilliant days of Salem's commercial life, the Derby's, the Crowningshields, the Silsbees and many more. Yet Salem was no longer the flourishing trade center that it had once been. Its maritime glory had fled. Other ports, Boston and New York, with their deeper harbors, now handled the growing commerce of the nation.

But as the setting sun leaves its afterglow, so the rosy memory of bygone days warmed the hearts of every citizen. They remembered that

in its palmy days it had had more trade with the East Indies than all the other American ports put together. From its very infancy its inhabitants sent vessels across the Atlantic of forty to sixty tons, and followed up the trade with Spain, France, Italy and the West Indian Islands. In the war of the Revolution it sent out one hundred and fifty-eight armed ships, mounting at least two thousand guns, and carrying not less than six thousand men.¹

They remembered the trade with Calcutta and China, with Japan and the Fiji Islands, with Madagascar, Zanzibar, Brazil, Africa, with New Holland and New Zealand. How easily they could recall the war of 1812, when some two hundred and fifty privateers put

¹O.B. Frothingham, Recollections and Impressions. p.39 .

forth from Salem harbor.

Then Derby Street was alive with sea-captains, the custom-house was active, the tall warehouses were full of treasures, the great East Indiamen fairly made the air fragrant as they unloaded their merchandise. To quote the language of 'Eleanor Putnam': 'There was poetry in the names of the vessels - the ship Lotus, the Black Warrior, the brig Persia, the Light Horse, the Three Friends, and the great Grand Turk. There was too, a charm about the cargoes. They were no commonplace bales of merchandise, but were suggestive in their very names of the sweet, strange odors of the East, from which they came. There was food for the imagination in the mention of those ship-loads of gum copal from Madagascar and Zanzibar; of hemp and iron from Russia; of Bombay cotton; of ginger, pepper, coffee and sugar from India; of teas, silks and nankeens from China; salt from Cadiz; and fruits from the ports of the Mediterranean'.¹

Even today we can feel these things in Salem, as we walk along its shady sidewalks and look at the beautiful brick homes with their large, welcoming colonial doorways. Wander into the Essex Institute, and there you will find the model ships made by the boat builders of long ago; there you will see the blue Canton China, the heavy punch-bowls and tankards, the tureens, the Delft jars, the carved ivories, the cashmere shawls. There you will be carried off into a land of romance, as you gaze at a copper idol from Java, a parasol from Calcutta, cloth from Otaheite, and strange looking musical instruments from Borneo.

But all this splendor, that had been the very life of the Caleb Foote's, had faded into memory by the time of Henry's boyhood. "Derby Street was deserted; the great warehouses were tenements for laborers; the sailors had disappeared; the commerce, owing mainly to the shallowness of the water in the harbor, had gone."² Only lingering traces remained. The rich old merchants approaching their three score years and ten, and their

¹ Ibid., pp.39,40.

²Ibid., p.41

fine old houses, already nearly two centuries old, could still be seen. And in these houses Harry saw the relics of those more romantic days - the sandal-wood that had been brought from the Sandwich Islands, bits of marble from Carthage, or a string of beads that had been used in the religious ceremonies of some weird tribe of the Pacific Islands. When he went weekly to dine with "Grandpa White" he drank, perhaps, from a cut-glass goblet, and on the stately table were the simply-designed pieces of colonial silverware.

Although the shipping was gone, there was still some ship-building. In Harry's diary for the year 1850 we find: "Sunday, February 10th. It was raining hard this morning when I woke up and so I did not go to church. I went to church this afternoon and after church went to see the ship-building in South Fields." And several months later he recorded:

"Sunday, April 21st. I went to Sunday School this morning as usual; after Sunday School I went to church. I went to church this afternoon, as usual; afterward I went to walk over to see the new barque."

The church to which he refers is the North Church, a rather fine stone structure on Main Street, with a tower, and a lawn in front. It was founded in 1772 as a result of a misunderstanding with the First Church, and rapidly became Unitarian. Its minister during these years was Octavius Brooks Frothingham, and it was from him and from Caleb and Mary that Henry got his solid grounding in the Channing liberalism. Dr. Frothingham was a young man at the time, for the North Church was his first parish. He graduated from the Harvard Divinity School in 1846, and entered upon his labors in Salem the following March. In his autobiography he writes:

At the Divinity School I was known as a young man with conservative ideas. I remember now discussions, essays, criticisms, in which the opinions in vogue among old-fashioned Unitarians were defended somewhat passionately against the more daring convictions of my companions. In especial my faith was in direct opposition to the spiritual philosophy; Strauss was a horror; Parker was a bugbear; Furness seemed an innovator; Emerson was a "Transcendentalist", a term of immeasurable reproach. All this was soon to pass away, and I was to go a great deal beyond even Parker..... But I well remember, one evening as I was walking out from Boston, presenting to myself distinctly the alternative between the adoption of the old and the new. I am afraid that the old commended itself by its venerableness, the solidity of its traditions, and the authority of its great names, while the new was still vague and formless. I then and there decided to follow in the footsteps of my fathers, a course more in sympathy with the prevailing temper of the age and with the current thought at Divinity Hall, although Emerson had delivered his address some years before, and the¹ New Jerusalem was even then coming down from Heaven.

So it was that the minister under whom young Henry sat at the North Church during those impressionable years from nine till fifteen years old, was still a follower of the old-fashioned school of Unitarianism. But Frothingham was not to remain a conservative. He found his parish work not very arduous, for Salem was a quiet place. The people were honest and sober, and many of them very refined. There were no great social questions, no more than could be handled easily by the philanthropic men and women of the town. Abolitionism was the dominant issue of the day, an issue which caused much hard feeling. Says Frothingham: "The anti-slavery agitation was at its height, dividing churches, breaking up sects, setting the members of families against each other, detaching ministers from their congregations and arraying society in hostile camps."²

But except for this difficult question, life moved smoothly. Rather too smoothly, thought the young man. Long hours

¹ O.B.Frothingham, Recollections and Impressions, pp.33-34

² Ibid., p.44

he spent in his study, reading omnivorously. Then came a crisis in belief. He visited Theodore Parker in Boston on a matter of business, but the visits became frequent and regular. He was greatly impressed by the man, and fell under the spell of his ideas. His change of convictions began to appear in his prayers and sermons, and he says that his parishioners were disappointed in him. Perhaps they were, but the congregations did not fall off. At any rate he felt uncomfortable in this conservative community, and when an invitation came to found a new society at Jersey City, he accepted. It seems unfortunate, now, that such men who might have carried their congregations along with them in their theological progress felt called upon to leave as soon as the majority of their people no longer agreed with them. Today we are often amazed by the conservatism of many Unitarian churches - those very churches which in the beginning were the leaders in the new movement. One of the dominant reasons for this seems to be that the progressive ministers have not been willing to work patiently along with their backward congregations. Here in this particular case it is impossible even to guess what a powerful effect Frothingham might have had on the growing lad, Henry Wilder Foote, who not long after was to follow his footsteps. That Henry had a great respect for his minister we know. That Frothingham's early beliefs were adopted by him we know. If Frothingham had stayed in Salem, great indeed might have been the effect on this serious-minded boy.¹

¹That there was no need for Dr. Frothingham to leave Salem is clearly shown in the following letter, written in May, 1854, the year before he left for Jersey City. It is a letter written to Miss Lucy Osgood by Henry's mother:

"I am coming to you most unexpectedly for sympathy in a threatened misfortune in which I am sure of your sympathy. Our beloved minister, whom I have never dared confidently

But Frothingham did leave Salem in 1855. By this time Henry had left for Harvard, where he had entered the freshman class in the fall of 1854.

During the intervening years between our imaginary visit with Daniel Appleton White and Henry's departure for college, he lived a steady, wholesome life. He attended Master Hacker's School, and, later, the Fiske Latin School, where he studied hard. Much of his spare time was spent with his father in the Gazette office, and for three years he faithfully performed the self-imposed duty of "carrier". His coin collection grew in size, but this material goal of his labors was far outweighed by the character training that these years afforded. His father wrote of this experience in a little book of private memoranda shortly after Henry's death in 1889:

Garrying the papers occupied about a couple of hours in the very early morning (from five o'clock in winter and four o'clock in summer), and he never once, whatever the weather, sulked or shirked the hardships of the business, or neglected to answer, on the instant, the stroke of his alarm clock. It was the verdict of all in the printing office that the paper had never had a more faithful and satisfactory carrier. And his own judgment, often expressed in his mature

to call ours, has received a unanimous call to settle with a society lately formed in Jersey City. You know I am old-fashioned in my theology, and, of course, must be aware that I could not assent to his views of Christ's nature. But I have never heard the preacher who so aroused my whole spiritual being. I feel buoyed up and braced up for any emergency and experience when under his influence - and his prayers! I can never express what they have been to me.....

I am trying to imagine how Salem will seem when they (the Frothinghams) are gone! It has brought back to me an experience of my childhood when, for a while, I had daily sight and knowledge of a family who then seemed, and have ever since been, my ideal of all that one may hope to meet in a higher state of being. If you have known Mrs. Richard Sullivan and her family, or have ever known anyone who remembers them, you will feel what it has been to me to have revived this early vision of my childhood as it has been in the home of the Frothinghams.

(Caleb and Mary W. Foote, "Reminiscences and Letters", ed. Mary W. Tileston (Boston; Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918) pp. 129, 200.)

life was, that that experience was one of the most valuable features of his education, giving him habits of punctuality, method, and strict attention to the business in hand, which no part of his school or college training would ever have supplied, and laying the foundation of that sympathy with the working and struggling portion of society which, with him, was a leading characteristic.¹

Besides these activities there was chance for long walks in the country, through the pastures, or to the old mill-pond, or best of all along the shore and among the wharfs. Then there were the thrilling games of "Prison Base" with the boys, and long evenings after tea for reading and studying. Once or twice a week he went down to his grandfather's house on Court Street for tea. It was a sane and healthy life, characterized by simple living and high thinking. Salem was pretty well cut off from the rest of the world, though the railroad did come through from Boston in 1840. There were few social gatherings, and these all ended early in the evening. Family life presented no such problems as it does today. There were daily devotions, the simple, regular meals, and an atmosphere of peace and aspiration after personal perfection pervaded the modest home. On Sundays there was little else to do except to attend church. In Henry's early diaries there occurs Sunday after Sunday the same pattern of activity; Sunday School and Church in the morning, Church and a walk with his father and sister Mary in the afternoon, tea at "Grandpa White's" and a quiet evening of reading. So passed the years as he prepared for college.

¹Ibid., pp.354-355

CHAPTER III

A HARVARD UNDERGRADUATE

Should some member of the class of '58 return after these many years to Cambridge, for the first time since his graduation, it is doubtful whether he would know where he was. As the subway whisked him from Park Street to Harvard Square in some eight minutes, he would recall how he used to make the trip from Boston during his undergraduate days. For when he was in college the horse-cars had just been installed. Tracks had been laid from the Square across the Charles River, but ended on the farther side of the West Boston Bridge. There, at the corner of Charles Street, one was left to walk the rest of the way to one's destination in town. Professor Francis G. Peabody writes:

A boy would leave his home in Boston on Sunday nights, carrying a large bag of books and clean linen, and would wait on the corner of Cambridge and Charles Streets for the coming of a lumbering and infrequent horse-car. If I were called on to define what it meant to be completely cold, I should name those prolonged delays at that tempestuous corner, awaiting the tinkling car as it languidly swung round from Chambers Street and paused to press one more passenger into its evil-smelling shelter, carpeted with straw, and heated only by the breathing of a mob which exhibited what has been called 'the tortures of the jammed'.¹

When our aged visitor arrived at Harvard Square he would be greeted by a spectacle the like of which he never saw. The Harvard Square of his day, which did not bear that name at all, had a simple, rustic charm such as one can hardly find today, even in the most secluded old New England villages. The Square was

¹Francis G. Peabody, Harvard in the Sixties, for Cambridge Historical Society, (1935), p. 21. This story is of somewhat later date, after the service had been improved. In the fifties there was only one car on Sunday evening, which left Boston about eight. Unless the weather was bad most students preferred the six mile walk.

simply referred to as the "village" by the students and faculty. In the Square one might have seen one of the clumsy horse-cars, with its pair hitched to one of the long row of white hitching-posts. Right in the center there stood a magnificent elm tree, which soon after was cut down to make more room for the horse-cars. Today, on that very spot, stands the "Rotunda" which daily swallows and throws out the hurrying thousands who live in the suburbs and work in the city.

One of the most interesting features of the Square of that day was the hay-scales, to which point the farmers from the surrounding countryside were in the habit of bringing their loads to be weighed. Indeed, the whole impression of the Square and the early "yard" was of a country village, with its academy. There were scarcely a dozen buildings in the yard, chief among them Massachusetts Hall, Harvard Hall, the first Stoughton Hall, (which was later removed because it was so badly constructed that it was falling down of its own accord), Holworthy and Hollis and Holden, all three of which are very pleasing looking buildings. Other buildings, such as the first Gore Hall (which for years was the college library), have passed from view, having been torn down to give room for larger, more modern and, for the most part, less attractive structures.

In the yard there was no lighting, nor any running water or sewer. Each night before retiring the student took his pails to one of the two pumps in the yard, filled them and carried them back to his room. Thus in the morning he had the means for his ablutions. If he wanted hot water he had to heat it in a pot on his own fire. The amount of bathing done, one is told by those who know, was extremely limited. Bath-tubs were introduced much later, after Charles W. Eliot had become president. They were

placed down in the basement of Matthews Hall when it was built. President Eliot told how, when he was an instructor living in Holworthy he obtained permission from Dr. Walker to have a gas line put into the hall. Dr. Walker at first was reluctant to grant this favor, for, he said, the students would play all sorts of pranks with the gas. But all this was after Henry's time.

This was the college to which the young Salem boy came in the fall of 1854. Here he spent four years of study under some of the most distinguished scholars of the period. The college routine of that day bears little resemblance to the modern scholastic system. At seven every morning the bell would ring, the first summons to chapel. Ten minutes later a second, louder peal would send the boy from his bed, to dress hastily and rush pell-mell with his fellows to the compulsory matins. There he would sink into the seat assigned to him, where his presence would be checked by the monitors as the preacher read the Bible. As Peabody writes:

Little could be gained of piety or moral force by our huddled congregation, with breakfast waiting and ulsters concealing their scanty raiment. The only distinct observation which I recall is the curious and inexplicable habit of our patient and unperturbed pastor, who invariably removed his spectacles to read the Bible and put them on again to pray. I have always wondered what this singular routine signified. It was as though the Scriptures were known by heart and needed no eyes to read them, while God was so far away that artificial aid was required to get within speaking distance.¹

After the service the students rushed out again, almost as fast as they had come, to where their breakfast awaited them in the eating hall, which had been remodeled for this purpose out of an abandoned railway station. Breakfast was followed by recitations, usually three in number, which consisted of hearing translations and recitations and the recording of an appropriate

¹Ibid., pp. 23, 24.

mark, eight for perfect, zero for not knowing the lesson. Henry attended the classes conducted by these intelligent scholars, but for the most part these sessions were uninteresting, cut-and-dried. The professors and instructors had no particular interest themselves in the teaching. Professor Peabody quotes Phillips Brooks as saying to him one day as they were walking across the College Yard in later years:

In that top story (of University Hall) our class met the gigantic mind of Dr. Walker, but he was completely absorbed in discovering whether Bill knew his lesson. What our best scholars knew or desired to know was not his concern; and since we all knew that Bill never knew his lesson, the time occupied in re-discovering his deficiencies left the first scholars uninspired.¹

He goes on to say:

Professor Torrey had the Constitution of the United States at his fingers' ends, but gave the impression of restraining his learning as inappropriate for unreceptive boys..... The most alluring habit in his classroom (that is in old Dr. Peabody's) was of watching Dr. Peabody inscribe on his list the mark applicable to each boy. A perfect recitation received an eight, and the teacher would balance his long pencil and rotate its tip in two circles, under the close attention of the class, which, when that mark was inscribed, gave its cordial approval. The generosity of his esteem was illustrated by his interview with a youth who inquired what mark he had received at the last examination, when the kind Doctor replied, 'A good mark, a very good mark indeed. By the way, what is your name?'²

Henry was a hard working pupil, a faultless scholar, such as would have been extremely annoying to the general run of his companions, had not his personality been so genial and friendly. As in the days when he had shone in the old Latin School in Salem, so he marched steadily forward, always carefully preparing his assignment. One's grade for the entire college

¹Ibid., p.27

²Ibid., pp.28,29.

course was figured by the addition of all the marks given throughout the years, with penalties for cuts both from class and from chapel. Then this grand total was averaged to give the man's rank.

When recitations were finished for the day, one could do what one liked with the remaining hours. True, one had to prepare one's lessons for the following day, but that was seldom an arduous task. Then there was a second service to attend. But even so, there were three or four hours which could be spent as the scholar pleased. Henry, it seems, spent most of his spare hours in the library in Gore Hall and in his room reading.

What seems to have been the most valuable experience of all during these college years was the close contact with and warm friendship of Dr. James Walker, the President of Harvard from 1853 to 1860. Walker was an intimate friend of Henry's grandfather, Daniel Appleton White, and when the latter died on the eve of the attack on Fort Sumpter, it was Walker who was called upon to prepare a memoir for the Massachusetts Historical Society, to which they both belonged. Much of the affection and esteem that the venerable scholar had for the Judge was transferred to his young grandson when he came into the college. In September of '54 Mary Wilder Foote wrote to a friend:

I left him (Henry) in Cambridge a fortnight ago. He enters with all good hopes and promises fresh in his heart. He loves study, and he enjoys companionship, and therefore there will be much in college life for him to enjoy, and I trust he may be preserved from the evil that is in the world. Mrs. Walker invited him with real cordiality to take tea with them every Sunday evening, and, as he will pass most of his Sundays there, I am glad that once a week he should see something like a home.¹

¹C. and M.W. Foote, op.cit., p.207

Dr. Walker had no son, but upon the grandson of his friend he bestowed his fatherly affection. Often did the young man go to the President's home for Sunday tea, and there "he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and the youth's docile temper suffered him to learn a wisdom beyond his years."¹ The influence on his character was great, and a very healthy one, for James Walker was a man of courage and a certain moral toughness. "Take counsel of your prudence, but never take counsel of your fears", he used to say to his young disciple. Henry gained from him something of this incisive character - the courage to stand fast, if not to go ahead.

Dr. Walker it was who guided the young man's reading and thinking, who spotted him as a worthy candidate for the ministry, and helped him to decide upon this career, and who, a few years later, decided that he would be an ideal successor to Ephraim Peabody of King's Chapel. Dr. Peabody had died "in harness", as have most of the ministers of the Stone Chapel, in the year 1856, and with its customary slowness, the parish had not called another minister.

During the fall of Henry's senior year, there occurred an event which, more than any other, led him to decide on the ministry as his profession. His mother had written of him during the previous winter:

Harry is supremely blest in his present life. Every moment is golden, no regrets, no fears, only shining hopes and eager aspirations; disappointment, anxiety, unrest, all unknown.²

¹G.L.Chaney, Article in the Christian Register, June 13, 1889

²C. and M.W.Foote, op.cit., p.252 - About the same time she wrote to a friend: "Harry came home to spend Christmas. I did not know there could be such unalloyed felicity got out of life as he succeeds in getting. He looks all the time as if he had that minute heard some crowning piece of good news." (Winslow Warren, Memoir of Henry W.Foote, for Mass.Hist.Soc., May, 1893 p.240)

He was happy in his college life. Indeed, he was happy everywhere, for that was his nature. But during this fall he fell ill, and on October 12th went home. The following day his mother wrote to her sister, Eliza Dwight:

I have been hoping, dear Eliza, that on Saturday I should have the pleasure of seeing you, but Harry, who has not been well through this term, came home yesterday really sick, and appears threatened with fever. He is very hot, and has pain in his head and restlessness, etc. A day or two will decide whether it is settled fever.¹

A day or two later it was decided - it was typhoid. He became extremely ill. Several days later he took an alarming turn for the worse. There seemed little chance of his pulling through. For weeks the sickness dragged on. Now he seemed better, now worse. It was the end of November before he was definitely on the road to recovery. During these long weeks his mother had nursed him faithfully, and had become terribly fatigued and run down. On December 7th she was prostrated by illness, which a week later developed into typhoid accompanied by violent delirium. In another week she had passed away.²

¹C. and M.W. Foote, op.cit., p.272,273

²In Caleb Foote's autobiography we find the touching account of this same period. Here he wrote:

On Thursday, December 24, 1857, occurred the great and terrible affliction of my life - the dear and precious wife with whom I had lived in perfect love and harmony for more than twenty-two years, left me for her heavenly home. No tongue can tell the greatness of her loss to me and to her children. She was a perpetual fountain of light and love to us all. She was the blessing of my life from the day I first knew her, and not a shade of jealousy, collness or anger ever interrupted for a moment our affection, which grew stronger, day by day, to the fearful close of her good and happy life.

On Monday, the 12th of October, Henry had come home from Cambridge, sick with typhoid fever. His mother had devoted herself to attendance upon him, thereby possibly imbibing the poison of his disease. About the middle of November, she had a sudden and violent attack of influenza from which, however, she recovered in a great degree, and on Wednesday, the 2nd day of December, rode

The shock of his mother's death, brought about through his own illness, was deep. The bond of love between mother and son was deep and strong, and from earliest childhood she had exerted upon him a powerful stimulus toward the achievement and maintenance of Christ-like standards of living. The letters which passed between them during the years at Cambridge are filled with tender passages of affection. The mother urged the boy toward that which was clean and holy. Now she was gone, but the memory of her life, even more than her words, was to remain vividly before him until the end of his days.

There can be no real understanding of the character and personality of this young man who was to become the dearly beloved pastor of King's Chapel, unless one knows the character and personality of the mother who was so very like him.

In that charming little volume of reminiscences, a Half-century in Salem, Mrs. Marianne Silsbee wrote:

It is a mingled pleasure and pain to tell of the brilliant women who left their places vacant; such memory is a rich legacy to those who knew their worth, and were saddened by their removal from all that made life honored and happy. Of one it is not easy, for those who best knew her, to speak with measured praise. The clearest head, the most expansive heart, a wonderful insight, that made her judgment of character

down street with our friend and physician, Dr. Peirson. It was the last time she left the house, and in walking home she probably took cold, of which she was soon sensible, but kept about, mostly between her own chamber and Henry's, till Monday or Tuesday of the next week, when Arthur (Henry's younger brother, born in '53) was seized with influenza on the same day his mother lay down upon the bed from which she was never more to rise. For a number of days her illness did not appear to be alarming; but about Tuesday, the 15th, she grew rapidly worse, and typhoid symptoms became strongly marked, with violent delirium, and all the most fatal symptoms of that dreadful disease, until Thursday, the 24th, when at about noon her breath ceased, her true and gentle spirit took its flight for that heavenly home for which her life had been a preparation.

(Ibid., pp. 347-349)

almost unerring, devotion to her best beloved, a soul filled with religious aspirations - all these qualities combined in complete harmony to form the character of Mrs. Mary Wilder Foote; and to this it may be added that a remarkable power of sympathy was perhaps her most delightful trait.¹

There is, in these lines of her devoted friend, no flattery, no undue praise. One cannot read her letters through the years of her life, so fortunately preserved for her descendants by Mrs. Tileston in her book Caleb and Mary Wilder Foote, Reminiscences and Letters, without feeling the grandeur of her character, the noble simplicity and the generous sympathy that was hers. She had a rich and unflinching religious faith, more mystical than that of most of her Unitarian contemporaries.

All these lofty characteristics she imparted to her son. Consciously she sought to develop in him the quality of sympathy, and rejoiced when he showed that quality. One day, while he was still a little boy, she found him weeping over some touching story, and to her Journal she imparted her gladness that she had such a son. Later, when he returned from college indignant over the way he had seen some negroes treated, she again wrote how happy it made her to see her boy aroused with righteous indignation over injustice.

In her father's home she received her sound groundings in Unitarian belief and faith in the loving nature of God, but it was after her marriage, during those hard years when, one after another, her beloved babes were taken from her, that she had her most trying tests in faith. Let us quote one of her letters from this period, which, though somewhat lengthy, throws a vast amount of light upon this beautiful spirit. It is a letter written to her old friend Susan C. Higginson, in which she tells

¹M.C.D. Silsbee, A Half-century in Salem (Houghton, Mifflin, 1887) p. 99

of Martha's illness and passing away. The date is May 22, 1842.

You would not have been so long ignorant of what I have suffered the last ten days, my dearest Susan, if it had been possible for me to write. But I have not been able to say a word even to Eliza (her sister) and it is a painful effort now. I knew you would be grieved for us when you knew that our fond and happy hopes were so suddenly blighted.

Three weeks ago today I was attacked myself with a fever and sore throat, and for four days was very sick. At this time my little baby was perfectly well, and so bright and playful that she held up her head, and made those sweet, responsive sounds that sound so like loving communion. I was able to sit up at the end of the week, and then my nurse was taken sick, and was obliged to leave me. The day after her departure, I discovered a swelling in my baby's neck, and showed it to the doctor, never imagining it to be anything serious. He immediately pronounced it to be erysipelas - not the common form of the disease, but what is properly called erythema. He has since told me that when he first saw it he knew it was one of the mightiest of diseases with which a little infant would have to contend. This was on Monday evening. My husband came home sick and, during the week, was sick as I had been. All the week I watched over my darling baby, witnessing her sufferings, which from the heat and from the pain it gave her to be moved, made the care of her completely engrossing. Yet I was obliged to leave her for my husband's sickroom; and Henry, too, had one of his feverish attacks in the midst. My kind friend, Mrs. Pierson, sat with me four days, leaving all her family cares. Nobody ever tended a child so exquisitely, and in her lap I could place my darling and feel at ease.

On Friday, my husband went downstairs, my precious baby seemed relieved, and in my lap she had sweet, natural naps, and stretched out her feet to enjoy the fire, and opened intelligently upon me her large, beautiful eyes. As the day went on, my feeling of confidence in her recovery strengthened, and at night I felt sure that the crisis was past..... I left her at eleven Friday night, under the care of an experienced nurse for a watcher, and, at three, I found her as quiet as when I left her. At five I rose and dressed myself, and she was sweetly sleeping. I sat by her two hours, enjoying exquisite sensations of gratitude. When she stirred, I took her from her cradle to wet her lips, and then I perceived a change. From eight o'clock Saturday morning, through the whole day, we were watching our little darling, slowly but certainly passing away. Mrs. Pierson was with me all day, and when night came, she would not leave me, but we watched over her together until two o'clock Sunday morning, when that feeble moan was hushed. The agony in which I bent over her did not seem like submission, but I was exhausted in body and mind, and nature triumphed.

I have not yet enjoyed that sacred rest which

aids one so much in heavenly aspirations. Sunday morning my husband, who had been watching beside our darling, and sharing all my sufferings, was completely overcome and went to bed. He was in a high fever and we soon discovered that he had a sore throat of the very worst kind. For three days and nights he suffered more than anyone I ever knew. I took care of him by night and day, excepting two nights when Dr. Pierson thought it safer for me to have another person in the room. He is now able to sit up, but still takes very little nourishment. You know the fulness of his tender sympathy, and may imagine my trial in being denied the solace of it at this time. He was in so high a fever that it was necessary for me to appear as usual when attending him, and I could not even mention to him that we must remove her, but, with Father and Mother alone I followed her to her lovely resting place, and returned silently to take my place in the sick-room. This has been a bitter trial - I am exhausted by it. But my husband's state of comparative ease and comfort puts new life into me, and I shall, with the blessing of God, return to my usual state of gratitude and peace. But you cannot tell - for I could never have imagined - what a loss this precious child is to me. I hung upon the hope of keeping her with less of the spirit of submission than I ever knew before. Do not imagine me unreconciled or repining, dearest Susan. I am weak and exhausted, but I feel that heaven will give me strength of body and mind, if I do but seek it.¹

With such a mother we can understand from whence came those qualities of sympathy and faith which enabled the man, whose life was also cut short in the midst of his labors, to say as he lay dying: "I have never had any dread of dying. Why should one dread going nearer to God? "

This was the mother who wrote her son letters such as this one:

I am thinking of you, and asking myself, as I often do most earnestly, if I have done all I might have done to build up within you a purpose of resolute devotion to the highest objects in life. I cannot be contented with your being a good scholar, correct in your habits and deportment, and popular with your instructors and companions, but I long to feel that you are living constantly in view of the great end of life; that you are aiming to do what God placed you here to do, and with reference to His will and approval. I believe that I would go on any pilgrim penance, and walk barefooted over rough stones, if I could be sure that

¹C. and M.W. Foote, op.cit., pp. 91ff

~~that~~ I was helping you on, in the only path of true progress. I do not want to tire you with preaching, dearest child, but I must constantly think of you and pray for you.¹

Today we think that we know so much more about bringing up our children than did our parents and grandparents. When one sees a mother-son relationship as pure and as constantly a dynamic for high living and high aspiration as this one was, one cannot but pause to wonder how often this is achieved in our "enlightened" scientific age.

Henry slowly recovered his strength, and was able to return to graduate with his class. But his inability to study for more than brief periods at a time prevented his attaining the high rank he otherwise would have been sure of. The year, indeed, was a sad one. His grief dominated his usual happy nature, and he became deeply introspective. Soon he had decided that he would enter the ministry.

¹ Ibid, pp.208,209.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

When Henry entered the Divinity School in the fall of 1858, it was in the midst of the long drawn out controversy as to whether the School should remain a part of the University. In 1852 the Board of Overseers of the University had appointed a committee to meet with the Corporation to consider how the separation of the Divinity School from Harvard College could be procured. Later in the same year a bill of equity was presented by the Corporation to the Supreme Court. The main reasons why this separation was deemed necessary were because the trusts assumed by the Corporation for the Divinity School could not be properly executed in the future, and had not been successfully executed in the past. This was a rather curious state of affairs, when one considers that the main purpose of the founders of the College had been to educate ministers for the Congregational churches of the Colony. But, as President Eliot wrote:

The real question raised was, whether an endowed university, fostered but not supported by the State, could properly contain a department of theological instruction. This question, obviously an intricate and far-reaching one in a country committed to complete toleration in religion, had been under discussion among the friends of Harvard College and the Harvard Divinity School for more than a generation, the trend of opinion being clearly towards the separation of the Divinity School from the University. Since instruction in the theory and practice of the clerical profession and its appropriate learning has uniformly been excluded from the American universities supported by public taxation, we can appreciate today better than our predecessors of 1852 could the wide and deep significance of the policy toward that learned profession which the Corporation and Overseers in 1852 asked the Supreme Court to permit them to adopt.¹

¹C.W.Eliot, in The 100th Anniversary of the Harvard Divinity School, 1816-1916, p.35

However, the Supreme Court turned down the request. This did not settle the question, for the Corporation and the Overseers were not willing to accept the decision of the Court, and in 1858 they petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature to authorize "the President and Fellows of Harvard College to resign all trusts heretofore assumed and accepted by them for the establishment and support of the Divinity School as a department of the University."¹ An appropriate act was passed, and the President and Fellows applied to the Supreme Court again, asking that they be allowed to resign the trusts which they had accepted for the maintenance of the Theological School. The Supreme Court never answered this petition, and shortly the feeling about the proposed change suffered an "about face" ; the whole matter was dropped in 1865.

But this controversy hardly affected the students at the Divinity School. When Henry entered, the School was in charge of two professors, just as it had been in 1816, though in the preceding year two members had been added to the faculty. These last two were only occasional lecturers, salaried at \$600., and the amount of time they spent at the School must have been very limited, as both were ministers of large and flourishing churches.

The two resident professors divided between them the task of teaching Hebrew, the Criticism of the Scriptures, Homiletics, Natural and Revealed Religion, and Pastoral Care. The student was expected to know Greek and Latin, a certain amount of Mathematics and to have some knowledge of Logic, Philosophy, Ethics and Rhetoric before entering. Professor George R. Noyes was the instructor in Hebrew and in the exegesis of the Hebrew and

¹Ibid., p.39 - A quotation from the petition of the Corporation and Overseers, to the Massachusetts Legislature, in 1858.

Christian Scriptures. He was a man about sixty years of age, quiet, a conservative by nature, and yet severely honest in his investigations. Thus it was that he often came to conclusions which seemed radical and destructive to his own beliefs, and which exposed him to the bitter denunciation of those who believed that he was leading the youthful scholars astray. Of him Andrew Peabody wrote:

I have never known a man so ready as he was to submit whatever he most wanted to believe to the crucial test of research, whether philosophical, historical or linguistic..... It is not surprising that a teacher of a temper and spirit like his should have had in the fullest degree the confidence and reverence of his pupils.....

In private and domestic life Dr. Noyes was a man of the beatitudes, rigidly truthful, perseveringly kind, generous in his estimate of the claims and merits of others, helpful in every possible way of those who needed and deserved help. He won the love of all who knew him intimately, no less than the profound respect of all to whom he was known.¹

The other full-time professor under whom Henry studied during his three years at the School was Convers Francis, who held the position of Parkman Professor of Pulpit Eloquence and the Pastoral Care, from 1842 until his death in the spring of 1863. Francis was first of all a student, a lover of books, which, he himself said, were, next to religion, the source of his greatest happiness. He was one of the first men to join the fight against slavery. He was frank and outspoken, and uncompromising in his enthusiasm for righteousness. Of him Edward Hale wrote:

He was not wholly successful in the lecture-room. Learned, impartial, magnanimous, and absolutely faithful in all that he undertook, he developed in the more thoughtful of his students the habit of independent judgment and deliberate decision; but others were impatient of his thoroughness, and mistook his breadth for lack of conviction. If, however, his method in

¹Harvard Reminiscences, pp.131ff.

lecturing too often seemed dry and without persuasion, those who knew him privately found in his conversation a great and peculiar charm. Here his wealth of varied learning, his humor, his suggestiveness, his modesty,¹ all combined to make companionship with him a delight.

In the same volume John C. Kimball wrote entertainingly and informatively about the way both of these men carried on their work. Kimball was a friend of Henry in Divinity School, graduating in 1859, so his words about the way these professors taught is of value as reflecting the opinion of the student body during this period. He wrote:

The method of instruction pursued both by him (Noyes) and his co-laborer Dr. Francis, to whom also much respect is due, had in it a combination of excellences which made it in highest degree effective. To formal lecturing, that delusion of many would-be teachers, there was given only a subordinate place. In Hebrew regular lessons were assigned, and the work done was tested in the recitation room with question and answer. In the exegesis of the New Testament, while he led the way, it was step by step, with an opportunity not only to make notes, but at each step to make inquiries. Now and then, especially in the Epistles, he would come to difficulties that he felt it no derogation to his position freely to acknowledge. At one such place I remember his saying, "I don't really know what the meaning here is, and, if ever I should have the good fortune to meet with Paul in the future life I think that one of the first questions I shall ask him will be what he intended to express by these words".... In all departments of study where it was possible original investigation was insisted upon, a special topic with the lists of books bearing upon it pro and con being given to each student, who prepared an essay upon it, which was read before the class and discussed by them, followed by the professors' views, which were also open for discussion. Independence of thought was encouraged.²

These were the two men who so ably followed in the footsteps of Henry Ware Jr. and John Gorham Palfrey, whose spirits must have still pervaded the atmosphere of the School. It was of Palfrey that the delightful tale was told of how, when he was

¹"Convers Francis", Heralds of a Liberal Faith, Vol.III, p.119

²"George Rapall Noyes", Heralds of a Liberal Faith, Vol.III, pp.271,272.

asked about the new students in the School, said that there were but three - one mystic, one sceptic and one dyspeptic.

As we mentioned a few moments ago, in 1857 the faculty of the School was increased by the addition of two part-time professors, who came from their parishes to give lectures. One of these was the historian, George E. Ellis, who was minister of the Harvard Church in Charlestown. An excellent historian he was, though how interesting a lecturer one can only surmise from the rather frequent notations in Henry's diary for 1859: "Cut Ellis". Certain it is that he lived purely in realms of factual knowledge, with little or no interest in poetry or art or music, nor, indeed, in the great social movements of the day. The other non-resident professor was Frederic Henry Hedge, the minister of the Brookline Church. Upon him fell the task of teaching ecclesiastical history. In describing him, Thomas Carlyle wrote to his friend Emerson:

Hedge is one of the sturdiest little fellows I have come across for many a day. A face like a rock, a voice like a howitzer, only his honest gray eyes assure you a little.¹

A scholar like his fellow professor Ellis, he had in abundance what Ellis lacked - a poetic nature. As a youth he had wanted to become a poet, and during his life he wrote a goodly number of hymns, some of which are still in use in our Unitarian churches. He was a close friend of Emerson, and was one of the original leaders of the "Transcendental Movement". He was known for one of the greatest thinkers of his day, and as well for his complete fearlessness.

The biographer wishes that the one diary left by Henry Foote of these years in the Divinity School contained more of

¹H.N. Brown, "Frederick Henry Hedge", Heralds of a Liberal Faith, Vol. III, p. 160 (a quotation from a letter from Carlyle)

the information which one longs to know; his own personal reactions to these men under whom he sat, his private conversations with them. But all that this diary contains is the record, and very sketchy at that, of his doings. Once one finds "Dr. Francis snappish this A.M." ; often one comes across "no recitation today" and "tea at Dr.W's" (Dr.Walker) . For a considerable period there is an almost daily note, "copied from dear Mother's journal". Evidently he did this systematically for several years after her death. It is an interesting commentary upon the close relationship of love that existed between mother and son. Perhaps the most valuable bit of information that this diary offers is the mention of books which he read during 1859. Among them one finds Schleiermacher's writings, Milton and Dante. He was apparently familiar with the writings of Horace Bushnell. He "read in Terence" . He read some of the writings of Emerson. "Read in Bacon's Essays".

During this first year in Divinity School much of his spare time was spent in the company of George L.Chaney, his lifelong friend. Chaney was a Salem boy, and they had grown up together. He was a year behind Henry, graduating from Harvard College in 1859. It must then have been somewhat of a disappointment to Henry when George decided to go to that little theological school in the west, Meadville. But George had good reason for going. In April of his senior year he received from Mr. Huidekoper a letter asking him to come out the following year to be the private tutor for Huidekoper's family. So it was that Chaney went to Meadville for his theological training.

In the above-mentioned diary there is one day in which he tells how he spent Sundays. Except for one particular, the attendance at the installation of Mr. Lowe, it seems to have been

a fairly typical Sunday. The diary reads:

Sunday, May 8, 1859. At college Chapel Dr. Walker preached in A.M. fr. Ps. XLII, 1, 2, . "Relig. not a science but a want". Walked to Somerville wi. thermom. at 90° to Mr. Lowe's installation and heard the last half of Dr. Briggs' sermon. P.M. Wrote abstract of Dr. W's sermon & heard him read the Chapel service. Prof. Torrey called at my room & made me late to tea at Dr. W's. Walked to Porter's fr. there, wi. Ch. Phillips & stopped at his room till 10. ¹

Dr. Torrey was another of the older men who were Henry's close friends during these formative years. He was the Professor of American and Foreign History at the college. Professor Torrey, writes Dr. Peabody:

had the Constitution of the United States at his finger tips but gave the impression of restraining his learning as inappropriate for unreceptive boys. The only maxim which I can recall from his lectures was the advice always to read the title page of a book. It would probably summarize what was to follow and might render the whole book superfluous.

And again he writes, concerning Torrey and his sister:

Mr. and Miss Torrey had for years directed a school for girls in Boston which both my sisters attended..... Miss Torrey's affection was as demonstrative as Puritan severity could permit, and while her brother's attentions were formal, those of his sister were intimately advisory, not to say dictatorial.²

It seems to have been a gift of Henry's, to have been able to become very intimate with all those older men, both in his profession and out of it, under whom he studied. It seems as if his charm, his simplicity, yet maturity, of thought, and his seriousness of purpose, made him a welcome guest in the homes of any of the professors. But of all the homes to which he went his steps led him most frequently to the Torrey's and the Walkers.

When one considers the ferment of beliefs in Unitarianism during the fifties and sixties, one cannot but be amazed that

¹From a diary in possession of the family. The abbreviations, which run through all his writings, are always consistent. He had a careful and well ordered mind.

²Francis G. Peabody, op.cit., pp. 28 and 16.

Henry was so little affected by the more radical thought of the day. There was Theodore Parker preaching his startling sermons across the Charles. There was Emerson writing his essays in Concord's quiet calm; the same Emerson who had, twenty years before, thrown a bombshell in Divinity School circles by his famous "Divinity School Address". Across the seas there were the rising schools of Biblical criticism led by Strauss and Paulus. But in spite of all this, there was no doubt in Henry's mind as to what he believed. He had read and heard Parker, but Parkerism made no such impression upon him as it had a few years before on O.B. Frothingham. All through his life one cannot but wonder at his immunity to the advancing thought of this period. It was as if the old-fashioned Unitarianism had been so thoroughly indoctrinated in him during his early years that it formed an armour of belief which not even the sharpest thrust of a doubting age could penetrate. After his mind had once been made up on any theological point, and this seems to have occurred for the most part early in life, it underwent as little change as it well could. This seems to have been a characteristic of the "White" side of the family. The same statement could be made with equal veracity about both his mother and his grand-father White. In the memoir of his grand-father, written by James Walker, there is the following passage which shows clearly the position taken by him with regard to religion, and though it was written of Daniel Appleton White it could be applied to both Henry and his Mother. Wrote Walker:

In religion his mind....underwent little change of any kind. He never forgot his obligations to Priestley for saving him, when he first turned his attention seriously to the subject, from scepticism. Priestley's writings did not make him a Materialist or a Necessitarian, but they convinced him of two things, in which he never afterwards wavered: in the first place, that

Christianity, rightly understood, is entirely reasonable and credible; and secondly, that there is satisfactory evidence of its supernatural origin and divine authority. Like Professor Norton, he built but little on what is called natural religion; that is to say, on men's unassisted reasonings or alleged intuitions respecting God and a future state. On these high themes the speculations of philosophers did not seem to him to be worth much. They settled nothing. Accordingly, whatever he expected or hoped for in heavenly things was "through Christ". The interpretation of the message, as it has come down to us, should be free as the air; but he did not see how its authority could be questioned without destroying its chief value. With these views, he wrote, April 9, 1848:

"To my surprise, Theodore Parker appeared in our pulpit, and preached all day. In the forenoon, from Revelation: 'A voice from heaven, which said, come up hither'. In the afternoon on prayer: quite a good discourse; better than the morning, which was quite characteristic, containing some sneering, some inconsistencies. Was sorry that Mr. Stone thought it proper to exchange with him; believing as I do, that he rejects the divine authority of Christ: but I had no doubt that it was proper for me to hear him candidly, without sitting in judgment on him or Mr. Stone." ¹

Judge White was a Unitarian, although, like Channing, he preferred the title of Liberal Christian. His religion was non-sectarian. He wanted it to be truly catholic. He believed that the Bible, and the Bible only, contained the truth about religion, but he was always ready to admit that men would and should interpret it each as he believed right. He, therefore, judged men not by their faith but by their works. Undoubtedly his objection to Parker rested much more upon Parker's way of expressing his beliefs, than upon the beliefs themselves, for Parker had a way of alienating those who disagreed with him. Even in later years, long after Parker's death, his memory was an unpleasant one in King's Chapel, and with due cause, not primarily because Parker had attempted to break down their bulwark of belief, but because of his famous remark, from his own pulpit, about the "spaniel of King's Chapel". The man so designated was none other than

¹James Walker, op.cit., pp.50,51.

that mild-mannered, kindly old minister, Ephraim Peabody, who was so beloved by his people of the Stone Chapel.

When one asks the question: why was Henry Foote the type of Unitarian he was? ,one can only find the answer in the environment in which he was brought up. When in later years Caleb Foote remarked: "I wish that I had Henry's faith" , he referred to that quality in his son which was also present in his wife and Judge White. Henry had, from earliest childhood been inculcated with old-fashioned Unitarianism, with a set of beliefs which however often he may have examined he never saw fit to discard or alter. To understand this we have to take into account the home environment, his careful and devoted bringing up by his parents, who were enlightened and intelligent persons, of considerable scholarship and literary ability, and deeply interested in religious questions. Winslow Warren, in his interesting and informative memoir of Henry Foote for the Massachusetts Historical Society, wrote of this home environment:

With such an ancestry, combining in rare degree ardent love of liberty, unusual literary taste, high aspirations for religious truth, and quick and ready sympathies, it was not strange that at a very early age Henry manifested great decision of character, a love of books, a strong abhorrence of meanness or deceit, and a frank, open, merry nature..... As the boy matured, and habits of reading and study were slowly acquired, no pains were spared by both father and mother to guide and encourage. The home was made the centre of influence and affection; instruction was given, but nothing was lacking of healthy childish amusement. Children's tales and histories were read together by the fireside, poetry was committed to memory and repeated, selections from religious books and the best modern authors were studied and discussed; the boy's youthful enthusiasm and interest was stimulated and fostered, and he was led by gradual steps to the acquisition of correct taste and judgment.¹

¹Memoir of Rev. Henry W. Foote, for Massachusetts Historical Society, (May, 1893) pp.237,238.

It was under this masterful guidance, as we have already noted, that Henry grew to maturity, a thoughtful, rather quiet, sensitive and even-tempered man. From his mother particularly he gained not only his deep love of people, but this strong, sure faith in God and in Christianity as a revealed religion.

Had circumstance called Henry out into the new west, as it almost did (as we shall see in the next chapter), into a community that was restless and questing after new knowledge and truth, it is quite possible that Henry would have grown theologically, and altered his views on Christianity. But as it was he spent his life in Boston, administering to the spiritual needs of what was probably the most conservative church in the denomination. So it is that we may look in vain for that element of steady growth in matters of doctrinal belief and opinion, which is a characteristic of the lives of most Unitarian ministers during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Grow he did in other ways, for he was a scholar all his life, but theologically he remained as he was in Divinity School, a conservative of unquestioning faith.

In the first sermon which Henry wrote, during the spring of his middle year in Divinity School, he used the text: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever", from the XIIIth chapter of Hebrews. In closing he wrote:

Both in teaching and in life, he(Jesus) is to us the manifestation of the Father. Never, until a sudden bereavement of all on which our hopes were set, overtakes us, can we realise the infinite value of this possession which we have in Christ. Plunged in a whirling gulf of doubt and dismay we grasp in vain at philosophical theories or aesthetic consolations; they snap at the strain, like a broken reed; we want not a surmise, but a certainly, that God is a loving Father, doing all for the good of his children. We look at Christ, "the same yesterday, today and forever", "in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; and the waves of trouble ebb away, and peace again returns.

God never was less near to men than now, but they groped after Him, "if haply they might find Him". It needed a manifestation in the flesh of the Divine attributes towards men, that they might clearly know Him. His presence was so universally diffused, over mote and atom and world, bathing all in its light, that they knew not whither to go, and wandered in pantheistic reverie or Epicurean sensuality. Then came the Son, "full of grace and truth", concentrating in himself, so to speak, the qualities of God which men needed to know, as a lens gathers up the rays of sunshine into a dazzling focus. Blessed by God for this gift to the world of Christ, through whom we are led to Himself, for "he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."¹

The passing years were to smooth out the roughness of style and delivery, but the belief in the nature and service of Christ was to remain the same.

¹Henry Wilder Foote, Sermon No.1, in Manuscript, written April 29, 1860.

CHAPTER V.

CANDIDATING AND CALLS

In those days the student at the Divinity School was not expected to do any preaching outside of the walls of the School until his senior year. Henry Foote's third sermon, we find, was not written until November of his senior year. The title of the sermon was "Practical Atheism" and was preached five times during that year. One of these occasions was at his Uncle William White's church at Keene, New Hampshire, where he visited in February, 1861. Uncle William, as far as I have ever been able to make out, was known best for his ready wit and keen sense of humor. And both he and Henry often laughed together in later years when they remembered a little incident which occurred at the dinner table that Sunday in February. The text of Henry's sermon had been taken from the fourteenth Psalm: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." At the table Henry asked his little cousin, Uncle William's daughter, if she knew what he had preached about.

"Oh, yes," she said.

"And what did I say?"

"You said, 'there is no God'", answered the child with utmost solemnity.

This same sermon was preached during that same month in two cities to which Henry Foote was to be called, Portsmouth and Cincinnati. Whether he preached at other times during the year at these two churches one cannot tell, as most of his early sermons are missing. The next in number is No. 7, "Our Idolatries" written in June, 1861, less than a month before his graduation.

At the graduation exercises it was the custom to have each member of the class deliver an address which was known as a "Visitation Part", as the day on which it was given was called the "Annual Visitation Day". For this occasion Foote prepared a manuscript of twenty-nine handwritten pages, on the subject "Evidences of Christianity as affected by Modern Thought". This discourse is of extreme interest to us, as showing the effects of the reading and discussions that Henry had done and mingled in with his fellows. His one diary of this period, as has been mentioned already, contains no discussion of his reaction to the more liberal thought of Parker and the foreign schools, which we know was stirring the minds of the student body. But here we see the conclusions which he reached, evidently after considerable thought and study. In his introduction he says:

It is, therefore, an appropriate inquiry, as we approach the anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, whether, in our day, the foundations of our faith are all knocked away - whether its evidences are made worthless by the advance of modern thought.¹

First he points out that, with changing time, there come changing tendencies of thought, so that the apologetic arguments of one age are unsatisfactory to the needs of the next. Paley, in the eighteenth century, was the great champion of the Christian faith, and the arguments which he brought forward were considered final and conclusive. Although Paley's "Evidences" still satisfy many who already believe, the doubters of Foote's day found these arguments insufficient, because they went behind them, denying, for example, the possibility of miracles, and questioning the testimony in ways which he did not foresee.

¹H.W.Foote, "Visitation Part", Evidences of Christianity as affected by Modern Thought, mss., p. 4 of introduction.

Those who consider themselves "modern thinkers", he says, seem often to become bigoted against bigotry, to take particular delight in their complete independence from all that is old and venerable. "Anxious only against an over-faith in anything, they are living examples of the wisdom of Bacon's saying, 'There is a superstition in avoiding superstition.'"¹ But such men we can leave out of the question, for they present no real problems.

Not in this class, however, are the genuine scholars, who, beginning in Germany, have spread new ideas, new thought throughout the Protestant countries. But have these men really destroyed the evidences of Christianity. Let us quote:

As Christians we rely on the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.....

Let it be granted, for the moment, for the argument's sake, that the epistles to the Thessalonians, Colossians and Philipians, as one German critic argues, or the epistle to the Ephesians, as another (DeWette) thinks, are not genuine - that the two to Timothy as he maintains, are 'neither historically nor exegetically comprehensible'; - that that to Titus must, in his opinion, be classed with them. Let that to the Hebrews be not the work of Paul. Let the Apocalypse be not the work of John the Evangelist. Let the epistle of James be post-apostolic, as the Tübingen school conceive. Let the second of Peter be spurious; and then second and third of John be ungenue, and, as Strauss and Baur maintain, the productions 'of the end of the second century'. Give up even the gospel of John to the same fierce critics - and grant to Schleiermacher that the first three gospels are 'a modification from a common original document'. I say, for a moment grant all this. What have we left? Enough of unimpeached documents, were there no more, to base Christianity as on a rock, so that neither rain, nor floods, nor wind could beat it down. In the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, which none dispute to be the work of Paul, we should have all that the people of Corinth, Galatia and Rome, when they were first converted to Christianity, (had), before there was any written gospel for them to see. We should still have the greater part of the teachings of Christ.

But we do not give up to these claims of the historical criticism. Some of them, to be sure, are

¹Ibid., pp.6,7.

nothing new. If we doubt the authenticity of the second Peter, John Calvin doubted it, too. We might doubt the Pauline authority of the epistle to the Hebrews, and do no more than the early Christian church did. We might give up the epistle of James, and we should only be following Martin Luther's example..... But when these critics have done their utmost, they still, in most of their attempts, bring only evidence enough to show their own want of success. The wonderful subtlety of the Tübingen school is not accompanied by a proportionate judgment..... From the gospel of John their attacks recoil, and in spite of the argument which they draw from their Paschal theory, it stands, the work of the beloved apostle who lay in Jesus' breast. And so the result of 'modern thought' in this direction is to leave Christian evidences really stronger than before. The extreme of the pulling-down criticism has been tried. No more can ever be done there.¹

From this line of argument Foote moves on to the question of miracles:

The class has undoubtedly increased of late years of minds who have a notion of miracle which seems to them monstrous to associate with their conception of a personal God, deep and real as that faith actually is to them.....(But) again I answer, (the evidences of our faith) are stronger than before. These doubts have brought us to a truer view regarding miracles. We have learnt, on the one hand, that that is not the side of Christianity to be presented first to a sceptical mind - that, as Edmund Scherer says, 'They are a sign, yet not for the unbeliever, but for the believer,' that active faith in miracles is not the thing which we should require first from a doubter..... On the other hand....the Christian miracles now present themselves, not as a suddenly improvised experiment, but as law. The true idea of law is seen, namely that it is the working of the immanent God, who, superior to any law but that of his own Being, is governed by the same perfect wisdom and love in regulating the exact succession of seed-time and harvest, of life and death, for the right ripening of souls for heaven - by the same wisdom and love, which, once in the course of the ages, when the time was ready, rolled back the mystery which shut men in, and sent on earth One Perfect Being.

That life proves the great miracle (we have learnt); in its record we find moral truth and the superhuman power which works in and controls nature, interwoven in such a nexus that one cannot be untwisted from the other. It is seen that this superhuman power in Christ is not a mere wonder-working faculty, but a gift inherent in his nature, a necessary

¹Ibid., pp.12ff.

constituent of the exquisite organization of mind and body, in such sympathy with the great natural forces which more outwardly were working according to God's will, as to make 'even the winds and the waves, obey him'.¹

But more dangerous to Christian belief than either the extreme views of the historical critics or of the anti-supernaturalists are the modern materialists. This is the group of men that ignore the very existence of God. They are like a man who looks at the window-panes until he cannot see through them to the world beyond. These men do not deny the existence of God but they doubt it. For immortality they have substituted the vague notion of a Buddhistic absorption. Their deity becomes Humanity. Christianity for them is something to look upon with patronizing pity. For this group the older evidences of Christianity are useless in dealing with this new antagonist. He quotes that famous passage from Coleridge, that "Evidences of Christianity! I am sick of the word. Make a man feel the want of it,.....and you may safely trust it to its own evidence."² But even for these people there is one Evidence, the oldest of all, which is unanswerable. It is the power of the Christian life.

"The church must orient itself anew, turn toward the east, the rising sun of our faith. It must shew that the Divine life is ever flowing in, through all the gateways of the soul; that man is not climbing up by slow and groping efforts toward a perfect self-development, but that it is the tide of influence from the spirit of God which raises him up; in other words, that it is not the uncertain reaching-up of the mortal from beneath, but the certain coming-down of the Immortal and Divine from above. The mystic tie with Christ Jesus, 'the author and finisher of our

¹Ibid., pp.18ff.

²Ibid., pp.26ff. (quoted)

faith', must be shown by the argument of living.¹

This visitation part gives us a pretty clear insight into the mind of the growing man. It shows clearly that he had not prematurely closed his mind to the currents of new thought that were surging around him, and yet he was always eager to maintain the old as long as he felt justified by reason in doing so. It is interesting to see that ultimately the basic evidence for Christianity as he saw it lay in the living of a Christian life, a Christ-like life. This was the life that he always sought to live. He knew whereof he spoke.

At these same graduation exercises was sung his prize-winning hymn, written especially for the occasion, but since in general use in our Unitarian churches. The words were set to the Lowell Mason tune, "Ward".

"O Thou, with whom, in sweet content,
The Soul that loves thee shall abide,
Grant that Thy spirit may be sent,
That, by its influence purified
And touched and blessed, we may be free,
Father and Friend, to dwell with Thee.

O fire our hearts with quenchless love
For men, and for thy truth divine,
That we may guide to things above,
Where in thy heavens eternal shine
The strong attractions of that home
From which, when found, no soul can roam.

And if, upon our lonely way,
We faint and cry to Thee for aid,
Then, O our Father, grant, we pray,
That by us, trembling and afraid,
May walk the Leader of our race,
Filling with light and joy the place.

Crown us with love, and so with peace;
Transfigure duty to delight;
Our lips inspire; our faith increase;
Brighten with hope our darkest night;
Bring us, from earthly bondage free,
To find our heaven in serving Thee.²

¹Ibid., pp 26ff.

²H.W.Foote., quoted in the "Christian Register", XL, 29, July 20, 1861. An early version. Later adapted slightly and the punctuation smoothed out for publication.

This lovely hymn comes from a young man, but it is marked by a maturity of faith and of style. Much of Foote's early writing, as can be seen in the passages quoted from the "Visitation Part", is vivid, but involved. The sentences are long, so long that at times the meaning is not easily grasped. But in the hymn we have a foretaste of the beauty of style that he developed through the years of his active ministry.

If one were to characterize this period of Harry Foote's growth, one would say that it was marked primarily by his ripe scholarship, and by his general maturity of thought. To his many older friends he was more an equal than a pupil. Dr. Walker said of him that he had known few students who had the conspicuous ability, the fondness of research and the enthusiasm for acquiring varied and useful knowledge in any comparable degree with Harry Foote. Thus it was that even before his graduation, as we have seen, several vacant parishes invited him to come to preach.

The months following graduation were filled with activity and conflict. The choice of a parish was far from easy. Henry went, first of all, to Portsmouth, where he preached several times. The parish had been without a pastor for more than a year, and was impatient. After preaching there several times they extended to him a call, although he had informed them that he could not give his answer until he had fulfilled his engagement, already made, to preach for six weeks in Cincinnati. At the vote of the parish, fifty-five of the sixty votes cast were in favor of extending the call to him, the remaining five casting blanks because they did not feel that it was wise to give the call, as an answer could not ^{be} obtained for four months. A committee of five was sent to Salem during the first week in

August, where the call was formally presented.

Meanwhile arrangements had been made with Cincinnati to preach there for a six-weeks period, beginning the first Sunday in October. Before going westward, Henry preached in King's Chapel, where the pulpit had been vacant for about five years since the death of Ephraim Peabody.¹

The church at Cincinnati, had wanted to have Mr. Foote come to preach for six months, but Henry thought it best to reduce that period to Six weeks. He wrote to Mr. Kebler:

It seemed to me, on consultation with my friends, that it would be better to shorten that period considerably, because, if I were to be with you half a year, it would not be right to make any parish here which might be thinking of me wait so long for an answer. Besides, of course, one object of my going to you is in order to ascertain whether Cincinnati is the field in which I am called to labor. This a few weeks ought to show sufficiently.....

Accordingly, Mr. Hosea and I agreed that I should go to you for that time (six weeks) beginning with the first Sunday in October and ending with the second in November next.

I also told him that at the end of that time I should return to Salem, and here consider and decide between any calls that I might receive, whether in the East or from you; and that my going to you for six weeks must be in no way considered as a promise on my part to go permanently, even in case that should be your wish, for that I should reserve the fullest liberty of decision until my return here.

Since then the Portsmouth Parish have given me

¹H.W.Foote, "Annals of King's Chapel, Vol.II,p.459,foot-note: "President Walker was a familiar figure in the pulpit of King's Chapel. After the death of Dr.Ephraim Peabody an unsuccessful effort was made in May, 1859, to secure his services as minister of this Church. The attempt was repeated the following year, when it was proposed to settle him with a colleague; but Dr.Walker's duties in Cambridge precluded him from entertaining the offer. During the period of this vacancy of our pulpit, and before the settlement of Mr. Foote, overtures were made, successively to the Rev.Dr.Andrew P.Peabody and the Rev.Dr.Thomas Hill to accept a settlement; but they were pledged to service elsewhere."

a unanimous call, knowing, when they did so, that my arrangements with you were such that they could not receive an answer until the middle of November, and knowing that after my return from Cincinnati the invitation would receive a full and fair consideration, equally with any other that I may receive. I shall go to you unpledged elsewhere; it is my desire to return equally unpledged."¹

To Cincinnati Henry went, feeling acutely the difficulty of his position. Portsmouth was waiting as patiently as it could, but few weeks went by without some communication from one or more of the members of the church, urging him to accept. Cincinnati was on the verge of extending a formal call, only holding off until the six weeks should pass. Into this scene came a new element, when, about the middle of October he received the following letter from the wardens of King's Chapel:

It is our agreeable duty to inform you that at a meeting of the Proprietors of King's Chapel held this day, pursuant to notice sent to each, stating its object, every member known to be in the City being present; it was unanimously voted to invite you to become their Pastor; and full powers were given to the Wardens and Vestry to make such arrangements as may be agreeable and satisfactory to you. They will without delay attend to this duty, and communicate with you, either through a committee visiting you or by letter. In the meantime we hope that you will give this matter favorable consideration; and we remain with great respect,

Very sincerely your friends,

Wm. Thomas)
Gardener Brewer) Wardens²

Henry immediately replied that he would give the invitation full and earnest consideration, but that it "would be a manifest impropriety, considering my relations especially to the Society at Portsmouth", to state any preference or decision until the end of the Cincinnati engagement. A day or two later letters came to him from Dr. Walker and Dr. A. P. Peabody, urging

¹From a Mss. in the author's possession, dated Salem, July 31, 1861.

²From a Mss. in the author's possession

him strongly to accept the King's Chapel offer. Dr. Walker, indeed, seems to have been influential in bringing the "call" to pass. In his letter he said that of all the churches in the country there was no other which he would rather go to as minister. "Under the circumstances I shall be very sorry, both on their account and yours, if you are led to decline it." Such an appeal from the man whom he admired and loved must have added weight to any natural leaning he may have had toward the Boston church. Dr. Peabody's letter stated the same wish, though less strongly, for he had a warm place in his heart for the Portsmouth church, from which he had resigned only a little more than a year before. He wrote

"I most heartily congratulate you on your call to King's Chapel. I rejoice in the full and cordial appreciation of your services, which has been all that your best friends could have desired. I know that this invitation throws another strong element of doubt into the arrangements on which I had set my heart for the parish so long mine; yet I should, nevertheless, have been grievously disappointed had you preached at King's Chapel and not been invited. May the Giver of all good counsel direct your way, and make your choice one which you can never regret.

By the way, when I consider the strong interest which I have taken in you, is it not a little singular that you should have a call, at the same time, from each of the Parishes in which I feel an intense personal interest? With me there is no fourth Parish, for which I feel more interest than I do for the whole Church militant; but I am impatient that there are not three of you for Cincinnati, Portsmouth and Boston."¹

Everything conspired to make the choice of King's Chapel inevitable. I do not believe that there was ever much doubt in Henry's mind. From the beginning he was strongly attracted to the place. Although he was ready, if need be, to be a pioneer in the new west, he was a conservative by nature. All his natural feelings led him to the old Chapel, with its liturgy, its

¹ From Mss. in author's possession.

history, so rich in the traditions of the early days of the country, its cultivated and intellectual congregation. He surely must have had but one doubt, that of his fitness for the place. It was no light and easy task for a young man, just emerging from the cloistered walls of the Divinity School, to follow in the steps of such eminent men as James Freeman, Francis Greenwood and Ephraim Peabody. It was no easy thing to become the minister of a large city church without any experience in the field. But friends wrote telling him that they thought him well fitted for the position. As one wrote: "your first thought will be of your youth and inexperience.....They have chosen you young. They are sensible, as well as kind, and will not look for the maturity of age."¹

Henry's close friend, Chaney, after Henry's death, wrote that Dr. Walker had foreseen that his pupil would be well fitted for the responsible position of minister at King's Chapel long before he had completed his work at the Divinity School.² When the other calls began to crowd in upon him, it was Dr. Walker who counseled him to move slowly, to wait until he was sure which one of the Parishes he was best suited for. There can be little doubt that King's Chapel was the ideal place for Henry, as Dr. Walker believed. As one of the members of that church said, he was fitted for the position because of the "faith that was in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice."

Hardly had the train deposited the young man in Salem

¹Letter from M.J. Peabody to H.W. Foote, in author's possession.

²George L. Chaney, Christian Register LXVIII, 23, p. 358
It should also be mentioned that Henry Foote was asked to candidate in Philadelphia and Watertown, Mass. but did not do so.

once more, when he took up his pen, and wrote to Portsmouth and to the Wardens and Vestry of King's Chapel. The feeling of natural attraction to the Chapel, coupled with the desire to be close to his father, had determined him to accept the Boston pastorate. Arrangements for his ordination were soon decided upon, and the date set for the twenty-second day of December.

The ordination service at King's Chapel followed the peculiar form instituted by James Freeman. Freeman had had no regular way of getting himself ordained, for, having given up belief in the Trinity, and having altered the Prayer Book accordingly, the Episcopal Convention decided that they could not sanction his ordination. A similar refusal was received from Bishop-elect Provoost of New York. Congregational ordination had seemed out of the question, and the only other alternative was lay ordination.

Lay ordination was still the rule. The service ran as follows: The senior Warden, George B. Emerson, opened the service by stating that the call to the Parish had been extended to Henry W. Foote, and that he had accepted. Dr. Walker gave the invocation. This was followed by Mr. Emerson reading the vote of the Society, and a formal invitation to Mr. Foote to become their pastor. A vote was taken on this resolution, and unanimously adopted. Then the young minister gave his assent to the contract, which was thereupon signed by the Wardens. Mr. Emerson then presented Mr. Foote with a copy of the Bible, as the standard of faith and authority for his guidance.

Dr. Walker next arose to welcome the young pastor into the ministry, giving him the right hand of fellowship. Then Walker gave the prayer of ordination, the charge to the minister and the address to the society. Following the singing of a hymn

the service came to a close.

After a brief interlude, the regular morning service from the Chapel Liturgy was read jointly by Dr. Walker and Mr. Foote, after which the new minister preached his own ordination sermon, as was the custom. His text was "He that winneth souls is wise". The manuscript of this sermon is still in existence, and, if one may judge from the amount of scratching out, from the great number of drastic lines drawn through the early pages of the manuscript, one may say that of all the sermons which Henry ever had occasion to write, this was undoubtedly the most difficult. Not long ago I was permitted to see a photostatic copy of the sermon which Ralph Waldo Emerson preached at the Second Church in June, 1832, the sermon in which he stated that he no longer felt able to perform the communion service. That manuscript also contained very similar markings of dissatisfaction. Foote never had to preach such a sermon, but this first sermon of his as minister of the Stone Chapel must have been an arduous task.¹

¹The information about this service of ordination is gained chiefly from an article printed in the "Boston Transcript" of Monday, December 23, 1861.

CHAPTER VI

THE ACTIVE MINISTRY BEGINS

During all these years, let us not forget, there were mutterings of war in the air. Hardly had Henry started his second year in the Divinity School when John Brown made his foolhardy attack on Harper's Ferry. He was the herald of the coming struggle between the states. O.B. Frothingham, just called from Jersey City to New York to found the Third Unitarian Society, wrote of those days when the war had come:

Though its physical aspect - the loss of treasure and of blood - was most affecting, I cannot but think that its mental and moral aspect has been underrated. Its whole justification lay in its moral character, and I must believe that full justice has never been done to those who were obliged to stay at home and uphold this feature. The preacher of the Gospel of Peace had as much as he could do to overcome the horrors of war; and the preacher of Righteousness was engaged all the time in promoting the cause of justice. They who went to the front had the excitement of battle, the pleasures of camp life, the assistance of comradeship, the comfort of sympathy. The preacher had none of these. Every day rumors were reaching his ears; "extras" were flying about in the silence; he had to comfort people under defeat, to humble them in hours of victory; to interpret the conflict in accordance with the principles of equity; to keep alive the moral issues of the struggle. This was an incessant weariness and anxiety; to fight foes one could not see, and to uphold a cause that was discredited, fell to his portion; it is no wonder that when the war was over he was spent and aged." ¹

This was the position into which Henry Foote stepped in December, 1861. All his life he had been conditioned to the belief that it was the responsibility of the Northern States to rid the country of slavery. ² Since his youth he had heard hot

¹O.B. Frothingham, op.cit. p.106

²That the family was strongly abolitionist is brought out in the Memoir of the Rev.D.A.White, by Rev.James Walker, D.D. 1863.

and fiery debates upon the slavery question. The Civil War, some historian has said, began about 1830. Certainly all the years through which "abolitionism" grew and waxed ever fiercer, made the final period of violence inevitable. All saw the crisis approaching. When it actually came, it had the support of most of the clergy. Henry, unlike many of his colleagues, apparently did not preach any sermons on the question, or at least none such have been preserved. But he did give the war his support. In December of 1860 he wrote his friend Chaney in Meadville:

It is difficult to concentrate the attention on anything now, but our great national crisis. Many of my poor broken resolves have been fractured by the time spent in reading newspapers - and today the news comes that the Charlestonians have taken Fort Moultrie. Well, if the struggle must come, let it come now. Never has the North had a fairer ground to defend, and never the South so proposterous an excuse for rebellion. I shall mourn deeply, if they succeed in overturning our grand nation; but I rejoice that my first vote was thrown for a man who represented principle, and whose whole conduct since election has proved his fitness to govern. And now that the storm seems to be growing irresistible, it is easier to see a power higher than our own, using means quite other than we looked for, to solve that awful problem of slavery. But the solution, I fear, is to be "by an Exodus through the Red Sea".¹

His support of Lincoln continued throughout the war, and on the occasion of the memorial service held in King's Chapel on April 19, 1865, he said:

Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, will be remembered as long as the annals of this nation endure, as the ruler, who, under God, guided us through four years of a terrible civil war, to the very borders of the peaceful restoration of national unity, under the one lawful government of the land. How the heart goes back (as we think of this, his mighty work) over all the varying anxieties and misgivings, the public calamities and the private sorrows, the alternations of success and defeat, the vast problems of public policy, the intricate relations with foreign powers, which have filled the

¹From a Mss. in possession of the author, from H.W. Foote to G.L. Chaney, dated December 28, 1860.

years with a weary weight. They have been hard to carry, for us all. They have seemed longer to those who were in the fierce current and whirling eddies of the time - as who was not? longer than a lifetime of peace. But he who was held responsible for everything which went wrong; who stood in the central place of all, and held all the countless threads in his hand; yes, who gathered them all up in his heart, - with what a crushing burden have the years rested upon him! Nowonder that men said, the other day at Richmond, that he looked utterly worn out. The wonder is, how with twenty lives he could have endured so long.¹

Foote continued his eulogy in glowing terms, calling him the saviour of his country, one whom the mysterious consecration of his death had set apart forever from the carping tongues of men. These years must have placed a great strain on the young clergyman, just starting out in his work. From the chapel went forth fifty-two young men for service in the Union Army, fourteen of whom fell in battle. Besides this visible token of service to their country in time of crisis, the members of the church gave liberally, under the direction of their pastor, to many causes, of their time and money.² Henry himself, without leaving his charge, carried on many of the functions of a chaplain. His visits to the Soldiers' Hospital in Pemberton Square were frequent, and for a while he preached there every Sunday afternoon after the regular Sunday Afternoon service at the Chapel.³

¹Henry W. Foote and others, Sermons preached in Boston on the death of Abraham Lincoln, pp. 181ff.

²In the author's possession are a bundle of letters addressed to Henry W. Foote from Dorothea L. Dix, the "Florence Nightingale" of the Civil War. Through her the members of the Chapel made numerous contributions to the "U.S. Hospital Service" which were used to purchase hospital equipment, and food and clothing for wounded soldiers. Also a letter from Rev. John H. Heywood of the Unitarian Church, Louisville, Ky., acknowledging a gift of \$1505. from the Chapel for white refugees from the war zone.

³While Foote does not seem to have preached any "war" sermons, he did have included in the Prayer Book in 1863 a prayer which he wrote and which was used regularly until the restoration

In 1864 he offered his services to the Sanitary Commission, but apparently there was no need felt for the type of service that he would have gladly given. When the war ended a special service of praise and thanksgiving was held in the Chapel, a service which took place just nine days earlier than the memorial service occasioned by the death of Lincoln. On April 10th the news came that Lee had surrendered. Immediately Henry visited some of the members of the church, obtained their support for such a service, went to the printer to have notices printed, and by five o'clock

of peace.

O Almighty God, who art a strong tower of defense unto all who do put their trust in thee, in this our time of danger we humbly commend our country to thy sure protection. Sustain the good government of our fathers against the men who are banded together to destroy it. Im part thy wisdom to all in authority over us, that by righteous and prosperous counsels they may hasten the coming of honorable and abiding peace.

Compass with thy favor as with a shield thy servants who have gone forth to defend us. Preserve them from all that may harm the body; and oh, preserve them from all that may hurt the immortal soul! Grant that in the perils that beset them they may gain a sure and steadfast hope in thee. And soon restore them, if it be thy merciful will, to their homes in safety.

Strengthen with the comforts of thy Spirit all who are sick or wounded for our sake; and though the outward man perish, renew them in the inward man day by day. Comfort all whom thou hast bereaved; and cause the stricken hearts to look to thee with resignation and trust.

O Thou who makest the wrath of man to praise thee, grant that these present sufferings may work within us a spirit of loyalty and reformation, and of obedience to thy will. Enable us to pray sincerely that it may please thee to forgive our enemies and to turn their hearts. Grant that we may not with cruelty or oppression proceed toward the end of our just desires. In all our battles, trials and dangers, support us with thy heavenly help. And do thou crown all our endeavors with a prosperous event in those great mercies which we beg thee, so that the cause of liberty and righteousness may be established, and thy people be brought out of their peril with hearts to love thee, and to show forth thy praises forever. And this we humbly ask in the name of thy dear Son, the Prince of Peace.

Annals of King's Chapel, p. 549

people from all over the city, even from as far as Back Bay, could be seen, trudging through the rain and mud with joyful hearts and faces, to attend the service. The church was nearly full, and the deepening twilight helped to create an atmosphere of solemnity, for it was a solemn service as many there had lost their closest friends and loved ones.

But the war was not the only circumstance that made the opening years of the ministry at the Chapel difficult. The parish was a large one, but it had been more than five years without a minister. Moreover, even before Ephraim Peabody's death, his years of active service had come to a close due to his long illness. As a result there were many strings to be gathered up. During these years of quiescence a great transition between the old and the new had been taking place in the surrounding Unitarian churches, and King's Chapel, ever conservative, had remained just as it had been in earlier days. The church into which Henry Foote came was like a closed corporation. It existed for the benefit of its pewholders, and visitors were not made particularly welcome. So it was the duty of the new minister to lead his society forward, over the ground already traversed by its fellow societies.

One of the first things done was a revision of the Chapel Liturgy. Few changes were made, indeed, and the thorough revision that he had very much at heart was postponed until a later period. The whole task of bringing the church into line with the current trends, with the demands of the new generation, was a gigantic one. A less cautious, less prudent man could not have possessed the patience necessary. Henry was content to move slowly, as long as progress was being made. He moved no faster than he could carry his congregation with him. But he labored unremittingly.

As Mr. Edes has said:

It is, indeed, due to his meekness of wisdom, his tenacity of purpose, equally gentle and firm, and the irresistible contagion of his philanthropic spirit, that he early secured the cordial support and efficient co-operation of some of the best men in his congregation, whose instincts and habits had been, and but for him would still have been, much more conservative than his own.¹

Boston seventy years ago would seem no more than a big town to its modern inhabitants. Almost all of Henry's parishioners lived within half a mile of the Church. Henry, himself, lived during the first two years of his ministry at 11 Tremont Place in an apartment. 11 Tremont Place was then a charming old-fashioned house. From his window he could look out on Tremont Street, over the ancient graveyard, to where the Boston Aethaenium stood near the top of Beacon Hill. The clatter of horses' hoofs and the clank of carriage wheels on the cobblestones below his window would make a strange contrast to the incessant roar of modern traffic, the endless jumble of noises that rise from that busy thoroughfare today.

Immediately Henry found himself fitted for a pastoral ministry. In this branch of the work he first manifested that rare ability to convey warmth of sympathy and enlightened advice to those who were in need which was his in no uncertain measure. Though he was a preacher of ability and of inspiring quality, it was as a pastor and a beloved friend that Henry excelled.

It was during the performance of his pastoral duties that he met Frances Eliot, the daughter of Samuel Atkins Eliot. Samuel Eliot, long a member of King's Chapel, a warden and in charge of the sacred music for more than a score of years, had left Boston in 1859 to settle in Cambridge. He had been Mayor of Boston and Treasurer of Harvard University. About the time of Henry's ordination Mr. Eliot was taken ill. Towards the end

¹Ibid., p. 553

of January, 1862, the end came. During the frequent visits to the Eliot home during those weeks, Henry met and fell in love with Frances. Owing to the circumstances, however, nothing was said by him. He decided that he should wait a year before speaking of his love to her, until he was doubly sure that she was the one who could fill the high ideal that he desired. But love cannot always be put aside so easily. The months dragged slowly by, and ever his anxiety increased. Frances, friendly and cordial, showed no sign of sharing his intense feeling. Often he thought that she must guess, but it was Mrs. Eliot who first suspected that the young minister had fallen love, when during the autumn he came to dinner and suddenly, during a discussion of General McClellan's campaign, became much flustered and embarrassed.

They became engaged on the twenty-fourth of January in 1863, just about a year after they met. On the engagement ring were inscribed the words "now and forevermore". "Ah", said Dr. Walker when he heard the news, "that is the reason you have not been to see me more often". To Franklin Smith Henry went, and told him, "I have come to tell you by Mrs. Eliot's request that her youngest daughter is engaged." "To whom?" "To me." Mr. Smith threw up both hands exclaiming, "I would have given one hundred dollars any day to have heard that news! I even thought of broaching the subject to you myself. Some people might have said you should marry for money, but I say, Give me virtue! Give me intelligence!" From Professor Torrey came a note to Frances, offering her the "right hand of fellowship" on her entrance into the ministry.

The date for the wedding was set for the ninth of July. Mrs. Ella Lyman wrote of that event in her Journal :

My heart very full of Fanny and Mr. Foote; was very sorry to hear in the night the rain pouring down after a long drought, yet their happiness too sure to be affected by sunshine or by cloud..... Arrived in Boston at 2:30. At four....we walked down to Church. The doors already open, a few persons there. Arthur (her husband) took us to a pew about half-way down the aisle on the right side.... At five came Mrs. Eliot with Charles, Lizzie Bullard and Mr. Bullard, Ellen and Charles Guild. At a few minutes after five the doors opened and Mr. Foote and Fanny walked up together arm in arm, followed by Mary Foote and Kate, in white bonnets and white mantillas. Mr. Foote looked remarkably well, but very grave and pale; Fanny looked lovely in her simple muslin dress and long floating tulle veil, an orange blossom in her hair. Dr. Walker and Dr. Peabody were already in the Chancel. Mr. Foote stood on the right, then Fanny, then Kate, Miss Foote and Charles. The solemn exhortation read by Mr. Peabody - then the promises, repeated by Mr. Foote in a clear low voice, by Fanny in an almost inaudible one. The ring given first to Fanny, then by her to the minister, who gave it once more to Mr. Foote by whom it was put on, and Dr. Peabody laying his hand upon both theirs repeated with him, "With this ring I thee wed." They then knelt and Dr. Peabody read the first prayer, and afterwards made a prayer of his own. After it was over the Choir chanted one beautiful Psalm, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills", they kneeling still. It came like a blessed promise after those solemn vows, God's own blessing..... They rose and Dr. Peabody pronounced "For as much as Henry Wilder Foote and Frances Anne Eliot, etc., I declare that they be man and wife, and those whom God has joined together let no man put asunder." They knelt once more and Dr. Walker read most impressively that beautiful prayer in the Marriage Service, and then, laying his hands upon their heads, pronounced the benediction - "The Lord God Almighty bless, preserve and keep you" - then raising his hands slightly went on with that most beautiful blessing - "that ye may so live together in this life that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting."..... They rose slowly and walked down the aisle. Arthur helped them into the carriage, and as he did so shook hands with Mr. Foote. Mr. Smith was out to do likewise, and after exchanging smiles they drove away.... to Manchester.¹

In the fall they returned to Boston to take up together their work. They moved into a house on Louisburg Square, 85 Pinckney Street, where they lived until 1865. There, in November, 1864, was born their first child, Mary. From 85 Pinckney Street they moved down to the edge of the Charles, where they built

¹Ibid.

their own house, No. 25 Brinkeman Street. Today the river has been filled in to form the Esplanade behind the row of houses on Brimmer Street, but then the waters lapped lazily against the stone wall of the backyard. To the wall Henry had a pair of davits attached, on which swung the rowboat in which he got most of his exercise.

From the new home to the Chapel was a good half-mile walk up over Beacon Hill. The story is told of how one wintry day soon after they had moved to Brimmer Street, Henry was walking up the steep, ice-coated pavement of Mt. Vernon Street, when he came upon a one-armed postman, an army veteran, lying helpless on the sidewalk, unable to rise. After helping the man on his way, Henry stepped into the house where the going was so steep and icy, and urged the owner to put an iron railing along the side of the house. Today the railing is still there to help whoever may pass that way when the wintry blasts sweep round the hill.

About this time Foote became acquainted with Robert Collyer. Among the files one comes upon a letter from Collyer dated March 28, 1865, written in the latter's usual terse and witty style:

Dear Brother Mine, I wonder whether that rich rich parish of yours will not give us a lift in the object set forth in the enclosed circular. Make 'em, and then you shall come out West some day and preach for me! And see a prairie.¹

Of Collyer Henry said in a conversation, "He has no theology in him, but a great, noble heart, and he preaches out of that."

In 1867 Henry asked leave of absence from the church for

¹A letter in possession of the author. The matter to which Collyer referred was a fair that was held to raise money for the Sanitary Commission and the Soldier's Home.

a year, that he might go abroad with his father. It was a long-cherished plan. The Church readily granted this leave, with the provision that the salary be continued and the pulpit filled without cost to the minister. Father and son they sailed, February 13, 1867, on the steamship Africa, for Liverpool. Caleb was still the editor of the "Salem Gazette", and weekly letters from them which were printed in that paper give us a vivid account of the travels through England, France, Italy, thence up through Switzerland to Germany, Holland and Belgium. To England once more, and this time they went up to Scotland. Finally back to Paris for the Exposition of 1867, and then home. The trip was a source of great joy and inspiration to him. He had visited many of the cathedrals, and had found a deep, abiding love for fine art. Physically as well the vacation did him a great deal of good. He returned full of vigor and enthusiasm for his work and entered upon the most powerful period of his ministry, the decade between 1868 and 1878.

In Florence there occurred one of those curious coincidences that seem almost too strange to be true. There one bright June day five men gathered around the dinner table, Caleb and Henry Foote, Frank Boott, Henderson Inches and the English scholar-author, Legge. Inches, Foote, Legge and Boott, made certainly a queer group of names.

Peace had been restored when Henry Foote took up the reins once more. During his absence a monument had been erected to the men of the Chapel who had lost their lives in the war, and on May 29, 1870, he held a memorial service. Four years later a final address was given by him in which he said:

In the memorial rites of this day let us mingle no thought of bitterness against those who stood against you in battle in those days forever past. They

are our brethren, and they and we have the common work together of building up, through the centuries to come, the mighty fabric of a Christian commonwealth. It was in no personal triumph over them that the nation hailed God's awful angel of victory; and as the best fruits of that victory we hail every sign of a returning brotherhood. Surely we respond in this hour to that appeal from a southern man in the halls of Congress to remember that their dead, too, were Americans; and the heritage of the valor and devotion of both belongs to the whole land. On the battle-fields of Sedan and Metz one may read over the grassy mounds the words: 'Here Frenchmen and Germans rest together in God.' This people is surely great enough and strong enough to write as generous a word over all its children.¹

Let this expression of brotherhood, of Lincoln's feeling of "With malice toward none, with charity for all", close this picture of those bloody years of strife. Other matters pressed hard for solution. There was, for instance, the problem of the afternoon services. The old custom of afternoon services had died out in most of the neighboring societies, and were but thinly attended in the Chapel.

In 1852 Dr. Peabody had sought to have the afternoon services discontinued, and suggested to the Vestry that an evening service should be substituted, at which time the pews should be free to any who might care to use them. "The value of such institutions", he wrote, "...depends not on a traditional doubting, semi-acquiescence in them, but on the deliberate conviction among thinking men that on the whole they are valuable, and because of their value deserving respect and observance."² But the Vestry voted against making any change in the afternoon service.

The problem was the same when Henry Foote took the church, but he set out to solve it along different lines. His aim was to

¹Annals of King's Chapel, p.559

²Ibid., p.507

revitalize the custom. In 1871 he arranged a series of twelve lectures "on the fundamental questions of religion" by various ministers, and from that time on he sought by various arrangements to increase and maintain greater interest in the afternoon service. In these special services his own part, as he took his place from time to time, was a series of lectures on the biography of the Old Testament, and another series on Church Music, with musical illustrations by the organ and the choir. Another series was a course of sermons on Christian doctrine that were given both in Brooklyn and at the Chapel. Besides these series it became the custom to invite the leading clergymen of various denominations to preach at the afternoon service. As a result of these various activities the afternoon services drew large congregations, and not infrequently nearly every seat was taken.

It was, as well, Henry's dream that the Church should be a sort of Cathedral Church, always open for whoever cared to come. In 1871 arrangements were made with four other Unitarian churches to have summer union services, each church being responsible for two Sundays out of the ten weeks vacation. This to him was a step in the right direction, for he wished to see the Chapel uninterrupted in its religious ministrations throughout the year. In 1872 he maintained a daily vesper service for a period of three months, but naturally he found the strain too great, and it was not until 1884 that the regular mid-day Wednesday service, the forerunner of the present daily service, was instituted. Thus, through his unrelenting efforts, the Chapel did become a place of worship for liberal religious persons of whatever faith, and did become in a measure a church which was ready to serve the entire community at all times during the year.

CHAPTER VII

THEOLOGICAL BELIEFS

When the crowd was dispersing after hearing the Berry Street Conference in 1873, two men were heard discussing the address. "What did you think of it?" said the first. "It's just what I would expect from a young radical like Foote", said the second. It is good to know that by a few at least Henry Foote was thought to be ahead of his times, for to us today he seems to have been a thoroughly old-fashioned Unitarian. He was, however, in no sense a theological "trail-breaker". His brand of Unitarianism had become largely a traditional form of belief. Temperamentally he was the very opposite of Theodore Parker. He was always eager to understand the other man's point of view, while being convinced of the validity of his own. He was interested in theology, but only secondarily so, for his main concern was the serving of the needs of men. His sermons deal primarily with the living of a Christian life, and seldom does he permit them to become discussions of controversial theological doctrines.

"Within the limits of Christendom all men are born bearing the name Christian", he said in his sermon "What it is to be a Christian".¹ We can no more escape this fact "than we can lift ourselves outside of the atmosphere which envelops the earth." It was a name given to a little group of believers at Antioch, probably in derision and contempt, but which has spread with the passing centuries to uncounted millions. But simply

¹Sermon #368, from which the succeeding short quotations are taken.

because we were born into the name does not mean that we are Christians, in the higher and deeper sense of the word. What is it, to be a Christian? There are certainly many definitions of the word, but "most of the misapprehensions about what it is that constitutes a Christian spring from either the formal, or the dogmatic narrowness with which it has sometimes been defined."

A Christian death, he says, has always been considered the important thing rather than a Christian life, "whereas, if the life be Christian, the death cannot well help being so; and though the death be ever so holy, if self and sin have been the dominant chords before, they make a discord so apparent to human ears that it must be heard in heaven." So it is that, in spite of the fact that God is "recognized" on earth in countless ways and that the Christian attitude is assumed by society, we cannot claim that the world is Christian yet. Being a Christian is not simply the acceptance of certain forms of worship. Nor is it simply a matter of one's beliefs. "It should never be forgotten that orthodoxy of opinion is nothing, compared with heresy in the life." Beliefs do, of course, greatly influence one's life, one's conduct, but we can never really know religious truth, much as we desire to, except by an empirical test, by the fruits of these truths in actual living.

Being a Christian is not simply to feel that the Christian way of life is a good way of life. We must always ask, "How does the feeling connect itself with action?" Now when he says that being a Christian does not mean the holding of a certain definition of Christianity, he does not mean that those who hold a narrow or dogmatic or sentimental definition may not be Christians. "Good men are often a great deal better than their theories; and virtue and holiness have the power of floating

a good many errors without being spoiled thereby, as a river will carry a multitude of objects on its surface, without essentially affecting the mighty current itself."

No, the only way to tell whether a man is a Christian or not is by his life. "It is to have the life (that is) regulated by Christian principle." Christianity is preëminently "a system of practices and character." To be a Christian is "to have a Christly spirit, and the thoughts of a Christian." And also, he adds, to have the hope of a Christian, which is not an intellectual speculation or a fancy, but a calm and steadfast persuasion of the presence of God. It is to have faith, faith in God and trust and belief in and love of "Christ Jesus". Christianity cannot get very far unless it is built, "first and last and supremely, on him who is the chief cornerstone. He who brings near to us God's Fatherhood and our childhood, and the Holy Spirit's neighborhood, and all human brotherhood - he is and must be, while men are men, the expression and the answer of the soul's cry to the Living God."

We now come to his belief in regard to revelation and immortality. He has a great deal more to say on the latter than on the former. The idea of immortality was to him of exceeding importance. More than twenty-five of his sermons deal more or less specifically with some phase of this belief. On the other hand it appears that the problem of revelation was virtually non-existent for him. There are no sermons which deal with the question except in a very brief and casual way. What, then, does he say about revelation?

In the first place, in view of the controversy over the question in Unitarian circles from the time of Emerson's far-famed "Divinity School Address" of 1838, it is really very curious that

Foote did not feel called upon to defend the older, Channingite point of view. That was his own position, as I will presently show. Emerson's point of view was that God has not ceased revealing himself; God is not dead; he speaks, not spoke. Parker followed Emerson in this belief in "contemporary revelation", and during Foote's ministry, through the sixties, seventies and eighties, many, if not most, of the Unitarian ministers also adopted this point of view. It is, therefore, hard to think that this problem was not one which would be troubling the minds of his parishioners, even if he did not feel troubled by it himself.

Fortunately we are not left without some light upon his belief in revelation. In his sermon, "A Prophet, and more than a Prophet", he says:

"Is it said that God might reveal His truth with equal clearness immediately to any soul today? Doubtless, He might (for who are we, to put limits upon God?). But, as a fact we hold that he never has with that immediateness of revelation to the world, save in the wonderful line of seers of the Hebrew race, who led the way up to the better, fuller revelation by His son.¹

His attitude toward the Bible we will deal with presently. From this passage we can see that he did not deny that there was such a thing possible as contemporary revelation, but that type of revelation was a pretty weak and uncertain thing, as compared to the revelations of God and of truth in "the Book".

When we consider the question of immortality we can proceed with more certainty. As I have said, immortality was to him of consuming interest. His arguments, his proofs of immortality may not be particularly original, but for him they were convincing. He had as sure a faith in immortality as did ever any Roman Catholic saint. One has only to read some of the

¹Unnumbered sermon, in Mss.

words which he spoke from his bed during that last sickness, when he was lingering on the border line between life and death, to feel the absolute serenity with which he faced death, the unclouded certainty of his faith. "I have never had any dread of dying. Why should one dread going nearer to God?" "So little way - so near." "I have perfect faith in the divine love."

His "proofs" of immortality he has clearly summarized in one of his sermons.¹ The first is the rebirth of life in nature. All about us in nature we see the death and rebirth of life, and reasoning by analogy man may hope for "the Diviner spring-time of the soul".

But better proof is the "argument from the incompleteness of the present life". One's life here cannot be fully successful, our desires and aspirations cannot be fully satisfied. They are so little conformable to the conditions of our earthly life, that we may be sure of immortality. "If immortality were a delusion", he said, "the persons deceived would be the best and brightest spirits of the race, who have gone calmly and trustingly down to the brink of the dark river, assured that He was waiting for them beyond. Yea! Christ himself, with his promise to his companions in the bitter pains of death, with his absolute trust in his Father's love, would be in the solemn pathos of his cross but the mightiest victim of the sad cheat performed on humankind by God." To him, as to many others, it was incomprehensible that the greatest and best men in Christian history could be so deluded.

There is a striking similarity between this passage just quoted, and that passage in the twelfth sermon in "Endeavors

¹Sermon #148. Mss. from which the succeeding short quotations are taken.

after the Christian Life", by Martineau, where he says that "if the celestial hope be a delusion, we plainly see who are the mistaken....The deceived are the great and holy, whom all men, aye, these very insignificants themselves, revere; the men who lived for something better than their own happiness, and spent themselves in the race, or fallen at the altar, of human good;.... Christ himself, who vainly sobbed his spirit to rest on his Father's imaginary love, and without result commended his soul to the Being whom he fancied himself to reveal."¹ Truly, such reasoning has yet a powerful emotional effect upon the Christian.

But there is another proof, the particular Christian proof, which lies in the peculiar doctrine of the worth of the human soul. "We dwell with comfort on the isolated promises of Jesus Christ; and we do well. Each of them has stayed the bleeding wounds of countless hearts. But when he teaches us that the soul is very dear in the sight of God, he utters one steadfast promise, which is also a reason.... Indeed, the very fact that we know God by faith is a proof of our immortality; for how could we know One to whom we were not akin?" This, then, is the final proof, for if we know God, we must be akin to him; and if we are akin to him, then our souls are of immortal worth.

Utter faith in immortality was not enough for Foote. He went farther, a brave spirit indeed, and sought to say something of the nature of the future life. It must be a condition only of higher and more intense life. It cannot be a "Hindu" absorption into the ultimate reality, but abundant life. Nor can it be wholly dissociated from this life. Activity, not rest, is the important element in life here. Heaven must be a state of activity, where we continue to grow. We should not think of it as

¹Martineau, James - p.117

a perfect state to which we shall attain immediately upon death. The growth of character and personality is the rule of this life, and presumably is the law of the future life. Personality is the most precious thing to us here, and so this future life must be personal to satisfy our desires; indeed, it must be more personal than this life. "The pantheistic doctrine of the loss of self in the great All, like the merging of a drop of water in the illimitable sea, is as contrary to all the analogies which the present life furnishes, as it is to the teaching of Christ." And again he says, "An impersonal immortality is no immortality at all." In summing this up, he says: "The thought of Eternity overwhelms the mind," but "Heaven can only be truly conceived of spiritually as it exists within, and not simply around the soul.... it is a state of being, of activity, of everlasting growth."

Henry Foote's attitude toward the Bible has been intimated already when we dealt with the question of revelation, but now we are in a position to take it up in a more thorough and systematic way. Of it we have manifold evidence, for in many places he makes clear his point of view toward the Bible. He gives about one sixth of his second Berry Street Conference Address, given in 1883, to the question of the Unitarian attitude toward it. Moreover, he preached at least three times upon the subject, once in 1863, again in '68 and lastly in '77. It is interesting to note that he preached these three sermons a total of fifteen times.

In the beginning it would be well to make clear his attitude toward higher criticism. It is clear that he knew well, and accepted in some measure, the results of the work of such men as Renan and Strauss. He welcomed such critical inquiry. "It is well to remember," he told his congregation, who, we may suppose,

were a little worried at the way the authority of the Bible was being undermined by these critics, "that all the study of the Bible leads, in the long run, to truth about it. We should never be afraid that the world will not learn more and better, even though it be taught a different view of some things from that which was once held. If criticism could have destroyed the Bible, it would have done so long before this nineteenth century after Christ. But the true result of the infinite study which this generation has spent upon the Scriptures will still be, as one of its eminent leaders has said: 'to preserve the historical use of Scripture as the continuous witness in all ages of the higher things in the heart of man, as the inspired source of truth and the way to the better life'."¹

At the same time he felt that there was a danger in becoming too absorbed in scholarly study of the Bible, as he says in his Berry Street Address, in that we may thereby miss some of its significance as a guide without equal to the attainment of the fuller life, the truly religious life. Just because we cannot take the Bible as infallible in every letter, of equal value in all its parts, we are sometimes tempted to cast it utterly aside. We have been fully aware of the Biblical criticism which "tries with unsparing analysis questions of authenticity and genuineness and inspiration." We are also aware that there are those who earnestly warn us against "making the Bible a fetish". We must therefore distinguish between the Bible as a book filled with great inspirational passages which can help us as no other writings can, to attain unto religious truth, and our critical views about the Bible. Our reverence for the Bible is not dependent upon the settlement of the problems which face the

¹Sermon #76, Mss. in its re-written form.

trained Biblical scholars; "the secret of its immortality is in the fact that it ministers to eternal wants of the soul". Our question, then, in this age should be: "How does it meet the necessities of the spiritual nature? If it answers these, it has an authority which nothing can break or change."¹

The Bible does meet the necessities of the spiritual nature, he says. It is the greatest "literary fact in the intellectual history of the world, the greatest spiritual fact in its religious history.... The writings which have thus been treasured by the religious affections of a world contain life perennial for the best and highest part of the soul."² While there were many groups which used the Scriptures with credulity and narrowness, the Unitarians were in danger of going to the other extreme. "Even in earthly things, is it not rash to say, 'I will climb Mount Blanc, but have nothing to do with guides', or 'I will write poetry, but will keep original by not reading Shakespeare'? Let us, at least, not kick away the ladder till we are sure that we have climbed to its top. May hap we shall find that it reaches the stars. No: the Bible is not outgrown: we must grow into it before we can grow out of it. It stands, and will stand, because it contains the voice of the child to the father, and the voice of God to His child."³

Lastly, we cannot take the Bible as being of equal value in all parts. We do not need modern criticism to tell us that. The books of the Old Testament are many of them chiefly historical. Their value is simply to show the way in which the Hebrew people

¹Berry Street Address, "Christian Affirmations", pp.19-20 1883.

²Loc.Cit.,p.18

³Loc.Cit.,p.21

slowly achieved a higher civilization, a higher religion. But the Prophets have a message to any age, the Psalms are always ready to give comfort when the storms of life beat in and the floods of sorrow fall. Most precious of all is the New Testament, of course, especially the words of Jesus. Read the Bible, he urges his congregation, "as something which fits into your life. What we need to give us inspiration for the work of life is to have a few simple facts brought home to our religious consciousness so that we can act upon them with power. Give me faith in God, and I can trust even where I cannot see, and can love, sure of an answering love. Give me faith in man, and I can take life in a different spirit, believing against all disappointments and sure that it is worth while to try to help my brothers. And this is what this Holy and Supreme Book opens to us with certain knowledge.... Try its parts by the way they fit you and the time you live in."¹

The problem of the miracles was important to him. The question was to him, not only did the Christian miracles take place, but also, can miracles possibly take place under any conditions? And on the answer depends the authority of the gospel story for us. "I believe," he said in 1871, "in the truth of the Christian record; the miracles seem to me, so far from being incredible, an integral part of the Gospel itself.... I believe in them with a deeper faith, because the questions of the time have compelled me to sound thoroughly my own reasons for this conviction."² His main reason for holding on to the belief in miracles was to keep the idea of the freedom of God. The miracles are not caused by the mere whim of an Almighty Being. They have

¹Sermon #76. Mss. in possession of author.

²Sermon #245. Mss. in possession of author.

a purpose, to show mankind the laws of God. Even the most wonderful of them is not too wonderful to impress the truths without which our spiritual life could not be.

Many of the miracles fall in with natural law, seem to be only an intensification of natural law. "Many of the miracles of healing seem in like manner analogous to the normal laws which restore the diseased to health....But other miracles evidently utterly transcend this natural order. So it is, above all, when we are told of one rising from the dead."¹

Lastly, we come to a consideration of his attitude toward Jesus. Here we find him as close to Channing as anywhere else. He quite evidently holds an Arian view of the nature of the person of Jesus. Jesus was Christ to him. Christianity cannot be separated from Christ. "The Christian church today is called, above all else, to focus that Transcendent Person upon the world. And that branch of the Church which best gathers up the rays of that 'pure beame of light', transmitting them unrefracted and unclouded through its transparent glass, will have the future. We need to abide by 'the simplicity of Christ' , to make his gospel as real a message of good tidings and good will to our generation as a letter to them from an Elder Brother whom they never saw....The personal power of the personal Christ has converted men whom philosophy and morality, apart from that power, failed to touch."² Jesus, the Beloved Son, is the supreme revelation of the nature of God.

He feels it extremely important that Unitarianism should not minimize the value of Christ. The "doctrine of Christ's

¹Sermon #255. Mss. in possession of author.

²from address at Berry Street Conference -"Christian Affirmations", 1883, pp.27,28.

continuance with his disciples needs the more to be emphasized among 'liberal Christians', because, in the anxiety to take nothing from the absolute supremacy of God, there is danger of reducing Christ to a dim, vaporous thought, a shadowy film on the outer edge of our consciousness; and in losing him so far, there is much danger of also losing our clear, vivid sense of God's personal life and love."¹ Unitarianism should remain "Christocentric".

Before closing this chapter of theological beliefs, it would be well for us to look into still another question, one that was raging throughout the land during the seventies and eighties. Evolution had appeared. As Foote welcomed historical criticism of the Bible, so he welcomed the advance of science. Not that he could accept all the findings of the evolutionists. He was never ready to flit from one theory to another, but waited for substantial proof. The ordinary concept of evolution, that the higher had arisen from the lower, must have been repugnant to him. Materialism seemed to him to be irrational, illogical. To suppose that mind was "cerebration", as Comte claimed, or the "function of the brain and nerve" as Haeckel said, was to kill all aspiration after the higher life.

In his sermon "Some Aspects of the Religious World Today", written in 1886, he said:

It is not unfrequently said that the Church is bigoted and scared before modern scientific thought. This may be true of many good Christian people; but I think that no one who believes in the supreme value of religion can fail to see that what the clearest thinkers of the great Christian communions look askance at in "The Scientific Church", is not its reverence for the facts of things; for they claim to have a like reverence, - is not its spirit of investigation; for they hold that it can find out no dangerous secrets. They do feel that there is temporary danger of oversloughing the spiritual nature of men. They do believe

¹Sermon "In the Name of Christ", in the Religious Magazine and Monthly Review, February, 1872.

with all the strength of conviction, that certain religious truths are established already by their own evidence, sufficient, though different from that of microscope or blow pipe - and that no man can ignore these truths without serious spiritual loss. They do not undertake to prejudge the speculations of famous scientific theorists, they hold that certain facts of religion belong in a different province and cannot by any outcome of such theories be overthrown. And is there any real believer in religion who does not hold thus? Is the existence of your God an open question with you? Or the hope of immortality? Or the fact that Jesus Christ speaks with a mighty power to confirm faith on all these points?

True science and true religion can not be discordant with each other. No greater error can be committed than to suppose that the geologist's hammer can break in pieces the law written on tables of stone; or the investigator's microscope resolve into vapor the immortal essence of spiritual truth. Whatever discloses grander and truer views of anything, in so far assists us toward a truer knowledge of the truth. Yet it does not follow that we are to demand from it the revelation of the truth in its spiritual essence. For after all, science can but read for us the facts of the material universe, without going back of them to find causes. Let it trace back the antiquity of man never so far, it is still met at the beginning with a "What then?" which it cannot answer. The laws of matter cannot reveal the laws of mind, - still less can they the laws of the soul. Science may lead her votary into the Great Temple of God's Truth, but only adoring faith can enter the holy of holies.¹

¹H.W.Foote, "Some Aspects of the Religious World Today", a sermon delivered as part of a special series Sermons on Great Themes, by various ministers at the Church of the Saviour in Brooklyn, and at King's Chapel in Boston, 1885-86. pp.109ff.

CHAPTER VIII

VARIED ACTIVITIES

These years after the War were filled with endless controversy between left and right wing Unitarians. Writes a ministerial colleague, as early as 1865:

I am thankful that the day seems to be at hand for the dissolution of "entangling alliances", when Liberal Christianity, if it continues to have a name, will mean something more than a repertory of all sorts of opinions on the highest and grandest questions of human inquiry, especially upon that question of our Lord on the answer to which he founds his Church, "Whom say ye that I am?" We have been building up with one hand and pulling down with the other quite too long, and it is high time that we were organized on a different basis.... I am in favor of no narrow platform. It should be broad enough for all honest Christians to stand upon but not broad enough for sceptics and scoffers to use as a vantage-ground for disseminating their pestilent notions.¹

Poor man, he did not realize that what has come to be known as the "Western controversy" was just getting under way, and that many years would pass before any semblance of peace between the "Ethical-basis" Unitarians and the "Christian-basis" Unitarians could be achieved.

So it was that throughout his whole ministry Henry Foote found himself plunged into just the sort of controversy that he naturally detested. A lover of quiet and peace, the storm winds raged continually about his head. All about him eastern Unitarians were greatly disturbed about the radicalism of the middle west. Hot and angry words were being spoken on each side, and it must have often seemed to him that he was playing the part of a buffer state between two warring nations. Not that he remained neutral

¹Letter from James W. Thompson, dated February 24, 1865, mss. in possession of the author.

in the fray. That would have been nearly an impossibility for any serious, ardent minister in the movement. Certain it was that he did not agree with the younger radicals like Gannett and Hosmer and Jenkin Lloyd Jones. He felt that they were going off at a tangent, that they were missing the significance of much that he held dear, and yet he did not join in the general hue and cry against them, he was not ready to deny them their right to the name of Unitarian. He did, however, state his own beliefs, in a quiet and sympathetic manner. With two other ministers he wrote an article entitled "The Ethical-basis Movement", in which he said:

Perhaps the precise difference between the Ethical-basis and the Christian-basis brethren may be that the former insist on giving to such a word as "God" or "Christianity" only a certain dogmatic meaning, - that is, a defined and limited meaning, which is a finality or the highest allowable use of the word (although it may be really a partial and very inadequate definition, or even a curious perversion, like Dr. F.E. Abbot's insistence that the only true Christianity today is the spiritual despotism of the Roman Church), - while the Christian-basis brethren allow such a word a general sense, which may cover several specific doctrinal (not "dogmatic") meanings, the higher of which are, at least, partially implicated in the lower; or, to use a different illustration, are shadowed forth and symbolized by the lower.

This may explain why some of the Ethical-basis brethren hesitate sometimes to use the words "God" and "Christianity", and regard them as outgrown. These brethren are too dogmatic in respect to these words. It is they who are the real dogmatists, not the Christian-basis brethren.

Thus our differences may be purely verbal; but if we are to work together as Unitarian Churches for missionary purposes, would it not be well to settle our vocabulary first? Otherwise, one preacher will seem to antagonize another, when really they may be perfectly agreed. It is a mistake for regiments in the same army to fire into each other's ranks, if they can help it.¹

And later in the same article, these men write:

¹Henry W. Foote and others, "The Ethical-basis Movement", pamphlet- p.10. (From the style and tone of this article, I assume that Henry W. Foote wrote the greater part of it.)

Says the last circular of the Western Conference (Unity, July 31, and August 28): 'If such a man, be he layman or minister, eager to establish truth, righteousness and love in the world, comes to our gates, sees us worship, hears us at prayer, listens to our spoken faiths, and says, "Let me join you, my purpose is your purpose, though my faith is not wholly your faith", he shall be welcome.' Of course, he shall! Did ever a Unitarian Church turn away such an applicant? Is it not unfair to intimate that this warm, broad fellowship is the Western novelty? But if such a neophyte should wish to go out under commission as a preacher of Unitarianism, not only to proclaim that there is no God or Immortality, and that Christianity is an outgrown superstition, must we not say, 'Better wait within our gates" a while longer, until you understand more clearly the solemn significance of these words which you so lightly reject, and the deep religious implications of truth, righteousness and love."¹

These passages show quite clearly his point of view, and as well that he had fully accepted the Unitarian point of view in regard to freedom of inquiry in the search of truth. While he did not agree with the Ethical-basis brethren, he did feel that it was of prime importance that a Christian spirit of love and tolerance be maintained. Often he sought to pacify those who held his position, the eastern position, when their ire had risen to the boiling point. He was not in sympathy with the fighting spirit of most of his colleagues, and disagreed with such sentiments as the following, expressed by his life-long friend, Chaney:

Something needs doing, if we mean to keep the Unitarian Church avowedly and really Christian. I can take no hand in paper addresses that are nothing but pleasant protests. They are flies, not ointment for our wound. Allen keeps pestering me with his paper panaceas. What we want is action, not talk.²

It is, indeed, due to the efforts of those who sought to avert a schism in the denomination, that the Unitarians avoided

¹Loc.Cit., pp.11,12.

²From a Mss. in possession of the author. A letter from G.L.Chaney dated June 13,1887.

a division such as had occurred in the Congregational Church during the early part of the century. But the crisis was averted, and the time came when the leaders on both sides of the controversy could look back upon it all with calmness and a slight smile. Both sides felt that they had won the victory, but to the west the laurels really belong. Wrote Gannett to Wendte in 1910:

The only important thing about the "Western Issue", I think, is to have it recognized as simply the continuation and outcropping of the "Theodore Parker Issue" in the west, the final - I hope the final - episode in a sixty-year long growth-strain within Unitarianism. That view puts things in their right relations, tells the whole story in essence, and relieves all parties from "blame". Growth strains can't be helped; they are all in the course of Nature, for all parts can't grow at equal rates..... The details are not worth telling, even if anyone knew them.¹

And Dr. Wendte wrote in "The Wider Fellowship":

For a decade or more it disrupted our religious and missionary life and brought in its train misunderstanding, ill-feeling and suffering which one would prefer to bury in oblivion.²

But there were other matters which pressed upon Foote during these busy years. His activities led him frequently and regularly outside of the limits of his parish. True to the spirit of Channing he was interested in all humanitarian ventures. One of the most interesting of these was the "Society for Aiding Discharged Convicts". This society was formed for the purpose of helping convicts, as they were released from the jails, to find healthy employment where they could make a fresh start in life. Often, in the performance of his duties as an officer in this society, Henry went to the Charlestown Prison at the hour when a convict was to be released. There he would greet him, show him that he had not come forth into a totally unfriendly world,

¹Letter from W.C. Gannett to C.W. Wendte, dated Dec. 29, 1910.

²C.W. Wendte, The Wider Fellowship, p. 329

and perhaps bring him back to his house for a chat and a meal. Much real aid in the securing of employment was given, and at least a fair percentage were thus enabled to return to normal social life through the efforts of the small group of men who were the members of the society. Of course then, as now, mistakes were made, and the philanthropy of the members was exploited by completely worthless individuals. Among the letters found in the files of Henry Foote is one from the agent of the Society, which, though it was written nearly half a century ago, has a strangely modern sound:

Your kind note containing five dollars was duly received, and contents in regard to Richard Watson noted. I will say in reply that he is a complete fraud through and through. He goes by the name of Walter Brandon, Richard McCarty, Henry Watson, and Richard Watson just as it suits his convenience. He is a professional pick pocket. He was not discharged from the South Boston institution within two or three weeks (according to his story to me). He is also a forger. I have not offered to furnish him any means whatever to get away from here for a long, long while. I have a forged letter in my possession which he brought to me as long ago as November, 1886. He is one of the worst, smooth, lying, brassy, cheating, deceiving confidence fellows that there is among us. That may not sound very Christian-like in me, but I must write you the whole story. I don't imagine he will call on you again as you mentioned to him that you should confer with me before you did any more for him. He has called on me ten or twelve times since May, 1884, and I have rendered him aid in various ways at various times in hopes that I might possibly get him out of his false ways and lead him into a better way, but he has gone back on me every time, until now he stands on my books as a complete fraud.

If there is such a thing as total depravity, he stands in the world today as a fair specimen of it..... I think it would be well for your purse if you would consult with me before giving them much in advance.¹

In charities King's Chapel led the way for Boston, and in large measure the congregation was led by the minister. Mr. Foote preached frequently on the wisdom of supporting various philanthropic movements. In the space of three years we find

¹Letter from Daniel Russell, dated January 19, 1888. Mss. in author's possession.

that he preached at least three times on the "Benevolent Fraternity of Churches". In the first of these he emphasized the two-fold character of the true Christian Church. Half of the work of the church is inward, unseen, personal. It has to do with the spiritual growth of the individual. But the other half is equally important, the resulting action on the part of the individual and of the church. It is gracious, beneficent, and full, like Dorcas, "of good works and almsdeeds". The church, for its own health, should be engaged in the sustenance of charitable objects. The Benevolent Fraternity existed, he went on to say, because the poorer elements of the population left the more prosperous churches. This was an unhappy condition, and in order to remedy it as much as possible the churches were induced to go to those who could not come to them, by maintaining a system of chapels conducted by "ministers at large".

Charity, as he conceived it, must ever be regarded not as an end, but as a means. Its true purpose is "to relieve distress in the name of him who 'had not where to lay his head', but so to relieve it as not to cause loss of self-respect or to diminish honest effort for independence."¹ The missionary work carried on by the Benevolent Fraternity was an excellent example of what charity should be, and the whole tendency of the work was to lessen both crime and poverty.²

A year of personal experience in teaching in one of the schools of the Fraternity, in a region on the outskirts of the city, gave me personal opportunity to see how terribly needed such a system was among a population who had been indeed on the outskirts of

¹Sermon No.187, Feb.2,1868, from mss. in author's possession.

²Henry Foote was President of the Benevolent Fraternity, and also for many years a member of the Boston Provident Association.

civilization, and how this Christian influence was moulding the characters which might have been a curse to the community, into a blessing. In another case, there was a cluster of shabby houses, standing quite apart on the confines of Boston, making a district of from 600 to 1000 inhabitants, and known by the name of "Sodom". Hither the Benevolent Fraternity sent a missionary, and for the first time the children were gathered into a Sunday School; for the first time Christian worship was held there.

The whole purpose of these instrumentalities, then, may be summed up in a word. They aim to touch the less favored in outward fortune with Christian sympathy, Christian light, and the strength that is in Christ, which rich and poor equally need. And it does this work, just so far as it is supported by liberal gifts from the abundance which God has blessed. It is a practical work, for the temporal advantage of society, which receives a manifold return for all its expenditures in self-supporting citizens. It is a religious work, and will quicken the piety of this church, just so far as it gives to it. In every respect, then, I can confidently urge you to open hearts and hands to it.¹

As with the question of the Benevolent Fraternity, so with all questions of philanthropy Henry sought to encourage his people to "be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plentifully;....for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity." (Tobit IV:8,9) He sought to instil in them a sense of the responsibility which their well-being placed upon them. One only has to scan the record of the number and generosity of the gifts of the church to see how successfully he aroused that sense of responsibility. Among the other charitable enterprises which the Chapel aided were the various "North End Missions", the "Employment Society", and the "North Bennett Street Workrooms", as well as the maintenance of district nurses for the poor.²

¹Ibid.

²The Chapel gave approximately \$2500. annually to the Benevolent Fraternity. For a time there was a movement to have the Bullfinch Street Mission surrendered by the Fraternity, and put in the sole care of King's Chapel. But this proposal was put aside.

Among the philanthropic interests of the church outside of Boston at least two should be mentioned. The first was the immediate response to the great Chicago fire of 1871. Hundreds of dollars were quickly raised and sent to Robert Collyer, and Henry Foote himself went to Chicago to look the situation over and to see what sort of aid was most needed. On his return he preached an impassioned address to the parish which resulted in a donation of several thousand dollars which was sent for relief work.

The other interest was a more permanent one, growing right out of the charitable work made necessary by the Civil War. As has already been said, the church gave generously to Miss Dix for her work among the wounded, and to the relief of refugees at St. Louis. Immediately after peace had been restored, the Church realized that there rested now upon the nation a new responsibility, that of educating the newly freed negroes and of making good citizens of them. For several years the Chapel supported two or three teachers and sent great Christmas boxes to various places in the south. But to the more thoughtful it soon became apparent that more organized efforts must be made. The Freedmen's Bureau had as its agent a man named Samuel Chapman Armstrong, who during the war had been conspicuously successful as a commander of colored troops. In 1866 he took charge of a large camp of negroes in the village of Hampton, Virginia, and soon after he had evolved a plan for industrial education of freedmen. The plan was to found an industrial school for the training of negro and indian teachers. The next year he recommended to the American Missionary Association that it purchase the estate upon which he was then living for this school, and the Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute was opened in 1868.

Henry Foote's interest in the school dated from this time. He later became a Trustee of the School, and a close personal friend of General Armstrong. The Chapel contributed heavily to the support of Hampton, and in 1885 raised the funds for a hospital. This finely equipped building was named after the Chapel, and on the walls of the hospital was placed a tablet bearing this inscription:

For the relief of
God's children
And in loving memory of

Mary Foote
Blessed are the pure
in heart.

1864 - 1885

Erected by members of
King's Chapel, Boston.

Mary Foote, Frances and Henry's eldest child, died in December of that year. It was for him a crushing blow, but, writes Winslow Warren:

..his fortitude and Christian resignation never forsook him, and without a murmur or a doubt he went among his people, attending to all their needs with a cheerful spirit, chastened by grief, but resolute that no personal loss should abate his zeal or impair his usefulness and courage. It was a hard and wearing struggle, and it came when there was dire need of his utmost physical strength. Doubtless complete recovery was retarded by the burden he so uncomplainingly bore, and he was less able in its presence to contend with the seeds of disease already sown.¹

These humanitarian interests formed a significant part of his work in the ministry. He was forever giving of his energy and money to the frequent calls for help, but more important he was able to arouse in the members of his congregation a desire to have the Church stand ready to support all these worthy philanthropic enterprises.

¹Warren, op.cit., p.246

CHAPTER IX

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY WORK

One important phase of Henry Foote's activities grew out of his character and his historical interests. He was elected a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1874, but long before this he had evidenced his love for research into the early history of Boston and particularly of King's Chapel. Shortly after his death, at a meeting of the Society, George Ellis spoke of him as having an ardent interest in the objects for which the Society existed during the years before he was elected a member. He was a frequent student in the library, delving into the files to find information and to collect material for the work which was to become his "magnus opus", his history of the Chapel. Early in his ministry it became his purpose to write such a work which, said Ellis, will "ever be a memorial of the fidelity, the catholicity of spirit, the sound discretion and other admirable and attractive qualities of the man".¹

The first volume of this History was published in 1881, and it was recognized immediately as a masterpiece of historical writing. It was an amazingly thorough and exact piece of work, and was, in fact, far more than a mere history of the church. Light was thrown upon the whole course of the history of Boston, particularly the eventful period before the Revolution. As he wrote in the Preface to this first volume:

¹The Boston Post, Friday, June 14, 1889

The unique position of King's Chapel in our political and religious history seems to justify and even demand the treatment of our subject, not merely as a chapter of the local and parochial Annals of Boston, but in its broader aspects as the centre around which were grouped the manifold relations of Great Britain to the Province of Massachusetts Bay. For nearly forty years it was practically the sole representative of the churchly and loyal traditions of the Mother Country among the children of the Puritans; and during the succeeding half century, until the Revolution, it retained its pre-eminence in this regard. Its history since that era, - from the time when for thirty years it stood alone for religious convictions, and "the first Episcopal Church in New England became the first Unitarian Church in America" (the words of Dr. F. W. P. Greenwood), through the period when its ministers, from Dr. Freeman to Dr. Peabody, adorned the faith which they preached, - deserves as careful record.¹

This first volume of the Annals deals with the period from the Puritan days up to the last Royalist rector, and is carried through in a generous and catholic spirit. The second volume, upon which he was at work at the time of his death in 1889, was of necessity completed by another's hand. The first hundred and ninety-one pages had been completed, and the mass of material for the remaining chapters was immense. Henry H. Edes was selected to finish the task, which he attempted to do. So it is that the second volume follows the general plan outlined by the author, but though it fails to measure up to the standard of Foote's work we can scarcely lay blame upon the shoulders of one who undertook the thankless task of finishing another's work.²

¹H. W. Foote, Annals, Preface viii.

²This hardly seems the place for a review of the actual history of the Chapel. It is thoroughly treated in the Annals, and for those interested in a shorter work there is a fine pamphlet which summarizes the history. This is "The Origin and Growth of King's Chapel, by John Carroll Perkins. (see bibliography.)

Besides being a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Henry belonged to the American Antiquarian Society, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, and the Essex Institute. But the greatest wealth of material for his work came from a veritable storehouse of historical records and manuscripts in his own church. To this he gave exhaustive study. In every piece of historical writing that he did, one sees the evidence of most careful, exacting research, yet he had the great ability of making interesting and attractive the normally dry details of history. All agree that here was a scholar of high calibre and of uncommon analytical power.

His interest in history extended beyond the colonial field, although his printed writings deal only with history of those times and of the Chapel. But among his manuscripts are notes of two series of lectures that he gave during the afternoon services at King's Chapel. The first of these are rough notes for a series of lectures on the history of Christian art, and they show a keen and cultured appreciation of the great Italian, Dutch and German artists of the Renaissance, as well as a rather thorough acquaintance with the literature of the subject. Much of his familiarity with this field of human endeavor must have been derived from his two European journeys of 1867 and 1878. The second are more thorough notes for a series of lectures on Church Music, which likewise show a remarkable knowledge of and appreciation of the finer examples of this art. One of these lectures, chancing to fall on the birthday of Johann Sebastian Bach, pays special tribute to him as the great prophet of religious music, the master of "all them that make melody on the organ". "There is not a Sunday through the year when our service is not richer, deeper, holier, from his direct or indirect presence in compositions

which could never have been written save for the inspiration of the blameless, pious, and exalted soul of John Sebastian Bach."¹

Henry's love of music and knowledge of religious music took more definite form in his collections of hymns for use in the Chapel. In 1878 he submitted to the Vestry for approval a collection of hymns and tunes for congregational use. This was published and used in the Chapel until after his death. During the last few years of his life he spent much of his leisure in bringing together a collection of hymns from all available sources. That hymnal, published in 1890, was finished after his death by his brother and sister, Arthur Foote and Mary Wilder Tileston. Though it was never widely used in the churches of the denomination it served as a valuable aid in the compilation of later hymns. From our point of view "Hymns of the Church Universal" may seem to be lacking in hymns of a social character and to be overloaded with tunes of the later Victorian period, but when it is compared with the collections of its time it shows marked superiority to them.

It is often said that the best way to study the theology of a church is to study its hymns. On the fly-leaf of the hymnal its editors have placed a quotation from Henry's pen: "In the hymn-book is the true key to the doctrine of the Communion of Saints; for here the saintly ones of all ages meet in their saintliest moods."² In the preface, Mrs. Foote wrote of the book:

A large part of this collection of hymns was made by Mr. Foote several years ago. He was all his life a student as well as a lover of hymns; and a hymn-book grew naturally out of his tastes and the needs of his daily life. In 1888 he intended to publish this collection, but failing health prevented the fulfilment

¹From a mss. in the possession of the author. #260

²H.W.Foote, Hymns of the Church Universal, fly-leaf.

of this hope....Fortunately the wide experience of his sister, Mary W. Tileston, has made possible its completion, in sympathy with its aim, and in remembrance of his life.¹

With his appreciation of music there was equal love for the liturgy used at the Chapel, and equal knowledge of the art of worship. Worship was for him the expression of a universal instinct of the human heart, an impulse of the soul to break asunder the narrow and petty aspects of life, a recognition of the vast depths of wonder and mystery of the environing world, of the presence of an overwhelming, supporting power beyond man. Worship is, indeed, as natural as breathing.

It is not to be feared that the Church of Science will hereafter be the only church, in whose bare walls the only incense that will ascend will be the frozen breath of its chilled devotees.... The Church of the Future will minister all art, all literature, all science, but only as leading us to that which is deeper and higher and broader and vaster than they.....

We must worship something, and if we do not turn to the high and noble employment of the spiritual faculties of the souls which they demand, the circle will come fully round and we shall find ourselves making divinities for ourselves.....

Approach the subject of worship on whatsoever side we will, we are brought to the same conclusion, that it is a necessity of human nature. If you check its natural outflow in the spiritual affections, the holy aspirations, the unselfish visions of the soul, it will express itself in ways as hurtfully intense as those in which it was foiled are high and pure. The untrimmed flame will veil itself in smoke and stench, but it still will burn on.²

To him the liturgy of the Chapel was a rich inheritance, a treasure and a trust. Glad he was that it had been purged of many of the doctrinal subtleties and theological difficulties, yet he felt that there were a few phrases still remaining that were likely to cause uneasiness in the minds of many worshippers.

¹Ibid., preface.

²From a Mss. in the author's possession. A sermon entitled "Worship", #174.

Such a phrase was the one in the litany where the worshippers ask to be delivered "from the wrath of God". Anything in the service which brought in disputed doctrines should be eliminated, as foreign to the purpose of worship. It should be free from the dogmatic statements which tend to divide men rather than unify them. The ideal form of worship would contain nothing which any follower of Jesus Christ would feel obliged to refuse assent, which any would feel as jarring disharmony.¹

This does not mean that he was not fully aware of the dangers of the constant use of a fixed liturgy. He realized that it could hamper the highest spiritual life, that it could be used as a crutch instead of as a wing. He recognized that there was truth in the arguments of those who claimed that the use of an unchanging form was soporific to man's quest for truth. But he felt that this danger could be avoided. Such an institution may become fossilized; it may come to be regarded as "an antiquity with no modern function".² But all institutions can be thus misused. The fixed liturgy, properly used, fully entered upon, contributes elements of value to the religious life which cannot be gained otherwise, especially when that liturgy is the written

¹In this respect he follows the ideal of Dr. Freeman: "The Liturgy contained in this volume is such as no Christian, it is supposed, can take offence at, or find his conscience wounded in repeating. The Trinitarian, the Unitarian, the Calvinist, the Arminian, will read nothing in it which can give him any reasonable umbrage..... Our earnest desire is to live in brotherly love and peace with all men, and especially with those who call themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ". (Dr. James Freeman's "Preface to the First Edition of the Liturgy", 1785.)

²H.W. Foote's views on worship are thoroughly stated in three of his writings. The most comprehensive statement is in "The Centenary of King's Chapel Liturgy", a discourse delivered in the Chapel in 1885. There are also a paper, "Liturgical Worship in Unitarian Churches", 1877, and a sermon "Worship" (see *ibid.*)

and spoken testimony of a simple, undogmatic, but earnest Christianity. It is necessary to hold fast to the devotional inheritance which we share with the rest of Christendom, because the sense of historical continuity tends to become weaker as the years go by and the gap between orthodox and liberal grows wider. By the liturgy we are brought into fellowship with the past. The transitory values are left behind; but what is of permanent value remains to enrich the life of each successive generation.

In one of his occasional sermons Henry gives us a very clear picture of his conception of the task of the minister. It is made up of four elements which seem almost incompatible, for each element demands a great deal of the man's time and strength. On the outside there is his duty and privilege to take part in the charitable work of the city, a duty which is forever calling him from his more immediate tasks. Secondly, there is the necessity to spend much time in solitary study, without which the springs of his public service become parched and arid. To accomplish this he must put aside many of the demands made upon him. But yet again, he must know his people, he must be their confidential friend. It is his privilege

To see you in your times of deepest experience, It is a much more difficult matter than it was even twenty years ago to discharge the pastoral work in this city with satisfaction to one's self. For at least one-third of the year most of you are scattered in nearly sixty different towns and villages. In the eight remaining months, besides the Sundays, there are but two hundred and fifteen days. Into these must be put all the preparation for the pulpit and the Bible-classes, all the rest that other men take on Sunday, all the calls to sickness and sorrow, and those calls to funeral service which, you will not wonder to be told, drain the very life away from a minister's sympathies, and leave him for hours unable to turn to any other duty.¹

¹ H.W. Foote, "The Ideal and the Real in a Christian Church", a discourse at the end of ten year's ministry." 1871.

And lastly, there is that final department of the minister's work, the preaching. That is the most important of all.

Any man ought to rejoice in the privilege of speaking every week to an assembly of living souls on the great, serious truths of the Christian message. He ought to suspect that something is wrong in himself if he does not find it, at times, a heavy burden. Everything of any worth is wrought out at the cost of something of life itself.....No one is probably so dissatisfied with a man's preaching as the preacher himself, for he sees the ideal which he tries to express, and knows how far the real falls short of it.¹

He goes on to say that in his preaching he has ever been guided by the words of James Walker, who had given him the charge on the day of his ordination, just ten years before. Those words were engraved upon his memory, how he bade him

Not to be silent on public affairs in dark and terrible trials, like that through which our country is now passing;....to plead for united counsels; for a brave resistance of wrong;....for heroic self-sacrifice....(Bring into this pulpit) not what you are seeking, but what you have found....Let it be the one care....of your preaching, to lead your hearers to look on Christianity, not as a question to be disputed about, but as a law to be obeyed, a spirit with which we are to be filled....There will be dark days, unexpected crosses to be borne, hope deferred which makes the heart sick. At such times, never lean, I solemnly charge you, on an arm of flesh, nor try to reconcile your conscience to a lower standard of duty.²

While Henry Foote was never a great preacher, yet all his pulpit work was carefully prepared, his messages of hope and inspiration were clearly expressed, and his manner of delivery was dignified and earnest, and sympathetic in tone. Shortly after his death, when the papers were filled with glowing tributes to the man, a short letter appeared in the Christian Register:

¹Ibid

²From a mss. in the author's possession. Charge given to Henry W. Foote by Dr. James Walker at the ordination December 22, 1861. To the congregation Walker said: "There are advantages in having a young minister, and there are advantages in having an old minister; you will not expect both in the same person".

An aged parishioner of the late H.W.Foote is moved to express her sense of blessing in having had the privilege of listening to his sermons. Many have been the well-deserved tributes to his character, so holy and so beautiful. But it was also as a preacher that she felt his marked power in shaming the soul for its shortcomings, in helping it to a high ideal, and strengthening it for life's daily duties. With no eccentricities in language, no sensationalism, in clear statement and in mighty earnestness from the pulpit of King's Chapel came the best influences that the pulpit can offer.

Many who have grown to manhood and womanhood in those pews will surely be better citizens and Christians more ready for practical Christian work, because they listened to the preaching of our Henry W.Foote.¹
L.J.H.

As we trace the course of this long and quiet pastorate, we see with what gentle force Henry Foote shaped the direction of the religious life of the parish. Underneath the placid surface there were strong and sure currents; beneath the unassuming exterior there was a framework of iron. Of him one of his younger friends, H.Price Collier, said:

If he seemed to the casual observer to lack force, - and I smile to think anyone could believe that, - it was because he did not use his powers for purposes to which most men put theirs. He could not be induced to put himself forward, and the world judges of the vigor and force of men by their ability to propel themselves. Therefore, because of his powers, both moral and mental, did not take the usual forms in exhibiting themselves, men failed - I mean those who knew him slightly failed - to appreciate that both his moral and mental powers were uncommon. He would back a good cause with unflagging enthusiasm. He would help to forward another's business with untiring zeal. He would oppose what he deemed an evil with a patient persistence most discouraging to the evil-doer.....

For these very reasons, few men were more likely to be misjudged by strangers than was Mr. Foote. His manner and conversation were not those expected of a man of forceful character; and yet there are many of us today who, if asked to give an example of a man of unswerving integrity, of one whose character might be described appropriately by the words "steel" or "rock", would name the late minister of this chapel, Rev. Henry W. Foote. When it came to a question of principle or where it was a matter concerning his own duty, he

¹From the "Christian Register", June 20, 1889

was as inflexible in his actions as he was mild in his manner. Those who took this sympathetic, gentle-voiced, mild-mannered man for one of easy habits and of wavering opinions, or one whose sympathies might be used to control his policy, found, sooner or later, that they had to deal with a man whose courtesy and whose readiness to serve were by no means indicative of his willingness to follow whoever led or whither-soever the road went.¹

This quality of character, which deeply impressed all those who knew him best, accounts for the fact that never during the twenty-eight years did he have disputes with any in his church. His patience enabled him to move slowly, but his will made that movement as irresistible as the movement of a glacier. Never did he consider any offers to move to other parishes,² and Edward Hale was mistaken when he said that Henry Foote was being wasted by remaining with the Chapel.³ He was admirably suited for just this place. When he was called to the Chapel, the church was not conspicuously unlike most of the surrounding churches except in the use of the prayer-book. Its doors were locked throughout the week; its pew-owners gave the place the feeling of aloofness, so that strangers were not drawn to linger within its doors, nor did the people have any conception of an obligation to the religious public at large. When death called him away, all these things had vanished. His conception of a church was as a center of religious life for the whole city, a Boston cathedral, welcoming all, and largely undenominational in character. He added services for Holy Week; he dreamt of keeping the Chapel open

¹H.P. Collier, in "Henry Wilder Foote, Memorial Service in King's Chapel", pp.50-52.

²Henry Wilder Foote was asked to candidate in the First Parish, Cambridge, in 1869.

³The sentiment expressed by E.E. Hale in a letter to William B. Weeden, printed in The Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale, by E.E. Hale Jr., p.117 - "I had two nice little visits at Providence. I tried to persuade them to call Foote, who is wasted where he is in Boston". The letter was dated March 31, 1872.

throughout the year, and not only on Sundays but throughout the week. He persistently carried on the policy of inviting the ministers of different denominations to preach in the Chapel at the afternoon services, so that his ideal of a place of worship for religious liberals of whatever name might come into greater actuality. He advocated the erection of a building for the use of the Sunday School and for charitable organizations. These various hopes and plans did not all come to fulfilment within his own short life. But as a pioneer, he heralded their advent.

CHAPTER X

GOING NEARER TO GOD

In 1878 Mr. Foote had a severe case of bronchitis, and in April was given leave of absence to go to Europe for the recovery of his health. Nor had he fully recovered when in six months he returned. Another leave of absence was granted to him, to extend until that time when his health should be fully restored. With his family he went south to spend the winter in Aiken, South Carolina. As the spring of 1879 brought the peach trees into bloom and the yellow Jasmine opened its blossoms to the sun, health began to return. His throat felt better after the long days out of doors, and his mind was busy with the writing of his history of the Chapel. But other troubles came. The warm climate was no guarantee against the usual run of children's diseases. The twins, aged four, had the chicken-pox, which was followed closely by whooping-cough. "The whooping-cough was proceeding on its resounding course,....and the youngest ones were worrying through after a fashion, when on Friday (little) Francie became feverish".¹ This added affliction turned out to be catarrhal bronchitis, which with the racking cough made the case quite severe. But as Francie was beginning to improve, Harry took his turn. On April 2nd Henry Foote wrote to his father, Caleb:

We have had an intensely anxious twenty-four hours, and the precious Harry boy is no better.....The doctor considers him a very sick child, though bidding us not

¹From a mss. in possession of the author. A letter from Henry W. Foote to his sister, Mary W. Tileston, March 23, 1879. The twins, Frances and Henry, were born on February 2, 1875.

to give up hope.¹

Three days later he wrote again, saying that they had been far in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, that the doctor had given Harry only one chance in a thousand to pull through.

His patient gentleness has been very sweet and touching to see, and he has been perfectly self-possessed, seeming to understand as well as we what was the matter. On Thursday morning, when we did not know if he would open his eyes again, and when he could not speak, he suddenly opened them wide and gazed a long, faraway look on each of us with such a deep expression that it was impossible not to feel that he meant to say goodbye. You have been through it all, dear Father, and know the struggle to bear the calamity.²

Anxiety continued. There were relapses, but the worst was passed. In May they returned home, father and children alike well on the road to recovery. Mr. Foote returned to his work in the fall, much stronger than before, but ever after he was liable to the return of the bronchial inflammation when suffering from over-fatigue. As the early years of the eighties rolled by he found these attacks coming frequently upon him, and accompanying them the first signs of heart trouble. But Henry Foote was not a man who could take life at a slow pace. The troubles of others were forever calling him to greater duties than his weakened condition could stand. That unending sympathy that so characterized his ministry and life, that ability to enter into the sufferings of his people as does the most beloved country doctor, drained the energy and vitality from him faster than nature could restore it. He was the consoler of all who were heavy laden; he sought to give new life and hope to all who came to him, in total disregard of self.

¹From a mss. in possession of the author.

²From a mas. in possession of the author. Henry W. Foote to Caleb Foote, dated April 5, 1879.

So it was that when, one day, Dr. George A. Gordon of the Old South Church was speaking of some Unitarian to Phillips Brooks, and said, "He's the best Unitarian I know", Brooks replied; "Except Henry Foote".

The year 1886 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Church, and December 15th was set aside as the day for the celebration of that event. On the first three Sundays of December Mr. Foote preached historical sermons. These addresses were very broad in their scope, dealing not only with the actual history of the Chapel, but also with its relations with church life in New England.

On the day of the celebration the Chapel was decorated in order to show the unique and historical significance of the church. On the front porch was a great tablet surrounded by six colonial and patriot flags. The interior decorations consisted of portraits of many of the important figures of colonial times, particularly of the Royal governors who had been members of the church; of twenty-four more colonial and revolutionary flags, and a group of coats-of-arms. The Governor's pew was restored, and on it was placed the crown from the top of the organ. The reading desk was draped in a British flag. Altogether the Church must have presented a great array of color, and it was a veritable museum of articles of historic import.

The service was attended by a crowded congregation, and was a great success. Most elaborate preparations had been made, at almost unlimited expense of time and energy on the part of Henry Foote. Special hymns had been written for the occasion by Oliver Wendell Holmes and William Everett. Addresses were made by President Charles W. Eliot, Governor Robinson, Phillips Brooks, George A. Gordon and Francis Greenwood Peabody, as well as

by the minister. Besides the hymn, Dr. Holmes, who had been a member of the Church for many years, read a poem composed for the occasion.¹ Of the service Winslow Warren wrote in his Memoir:

His (Henry's) position as pastor naturally made him a most prominent figure, and involved for him great and fatiguing labor. His discourse upon the occasion was learned, thoughtful, and eloquent, - second to none of the able addresses delivered. He entered into the spirit of the occasion with his accustomed enthusiasm, and was more than gratified with its complete success.....This, perhaps, was the culmination of his life's work. The few remaining years were those of regular duties nobly performed, and a continuation of the relations between him and his parish of perfect confidence and love.²

In the fall of 1888 Henry fell ill with what appeared at first to be but another of his severe bronchial attacks. But other more serious symptoms appeared. From December until his death in May he was severely ill, sometimes apparently convalescing, but more often his life seemed in imminent danger. His heart became seriously affected, and throughout the winter he suffered acutely. Yet he bore all with quiet resignation. Through it all he manifested the power of his faith, and was calm and happy. "It seems", said his old friend Chaney, in a memorial sermon at the Chapel on June 9, 1889:

as if he had been appointed to linger on the border line between the seen and the unseen worlds, that he might confirm our faith in heaven, even though, like enraptured Paul, he could not wholly report the unspeakable glories.³

In the handwriting of his devoted wife we have preserved for us two little note-books full of his saying during those last months which show the beauty and the certainty of his faith, the

¹The entire service was subsequently published in a volume entitled: The Commemoration by King's Chapel, Boston, of the Completion of Two Hundred Years.

²Warren, op.cit., pp. 246, 7.

³G.L. Chaney, a sermon preached June 9, 1889, in King's Chapel, printed in - Henry Wilder Foote, Memorial Service in King's Chapel, p. 31.

splendor of his courage, as he faced the outcome of his illness. The incompleteness of his life, yet the knowledge that he had done his best; the sorrow of leaving his loved ones, yet the eager anticipation with which he looked forward to the world beyond, - all mingled in his utterances of those fading days.

"It is a beautiful set of worlds we live in, ~~the~~ heaven and earth."

"Do not look at the mercies which are taken away, but at those which remain. They are many."

"I carry unfinished duties out of the world with me. It is a great cross to me."

"Love is so much stronger than all this pain."

"I have perfect faith in the divine love. We can bear all things, if only the Lord will not withhold the light of his countenance."

"The promises have never failed."

"I have never had any dread of dying. Why should one dread going nearer to God?"

"So little way - so near."

"My mind is never vacant as I lie here. I can't talk; but I can think, and I can trust."

Even on a day when it seemed as if each hour would be his last, his thankfulness and serenity continued:

"It's been a happy day, - a wonderful day. I have felt so wrapped about by the Lord's peace. It's his best gift."

When he was suffering, he said: "I don't like it, but the blessing is so much deeper than the pain."

"It's the same world beyond, - the world of love, and trust, and Christ."

"I trust in the living God, our loving Father."

"Faith, faith, faith. I believe that what I have been taught is true. I believe that what those I have loved trusted in, they were safe in."

"The reality of divine help, - if I could make others feel that, without dwelling on my own experience!"

He never ceased to be surprised at the warmth of interest

and sympathy shown him during his illness. He had been so busily engaged in giving his sympathy to others, that he had not realized how much he was loved.

"I am glad so many messages of love and kindness have come to me, - they have been a real happiness."

"Thank all my benefactors. It must be a very loving word of my gratitude."

"How the wonderful love and kindness of friends surrounds me like a benediction."

"Such friendship is one of the eternal joys."

Often his thoughts dwelt upon his beloved church.

"I wish my people knew how I love them."

"Give my love to everybody at the church."

"Dear friends, I would fain just help them to live nearer to each other and to God."

"I do so long to reach out to my dear people. I have so many things of love and trust to say to them, but I have not the strength. It's been the real bond of pastor and people."

"They know without my telling them that I believe with my whole heart what I have tried to persuade them."

"In all these weeks I have been trying to put together a few sentences to say to them; but I have been so burdened by this constant discomfort that I could not. But deeper than the discomfort has been the constant sense that all is well."

Finally in April he did have enough strength to write a message to the Church for Easter. As that day approached, his thoughts turned more and more to his people. The message was dated Easter, April 21, 1889.

"Dear Friends, - With a great desire I long to be with you in the joy and thankfulness of this happy, holy Easter time. On twenty-five Easters I have had the privilege of standing in this place; and now I rejoice to be very near in body, and present with you in spirit.

Let us share together not only the flowers and the gladness, but the deepest thoughts of this festival of the risen Christ. To it belong all the heights to which our souls can rise, where we shall be in communion with the host of holy souls on earth and in heaven, and all

the deeds of ministering love of which he was the example.

"Active in charity,
Praise him in verity!
His feast, prepare it ye!
His message, bear it ye!
His joy, declare it ye!
Then is the Master near,
Then is he here."

May the God of peace fill our thoughts with gratitude for the great gift of trust in him as our Father, and in the life eternal, which makes the seen and unseen worlds one!¹

Even in the times of greatest pain, his mind turned outward. The habit of self-forgetfulness was too firmly a part of his very nature to let even this suffering make him self-centered. While too ill to take up pen himself, he dictated a letter to a friend who had just lost a loved one:

I cannot sleep without sending you a word out of a full heart; yet I will not speak of sympathy, but of thoughts of blessing and gratitude with which every thought of.....must be filled. Let me share with you your thankfulness for her. I pray God that you may be folded about by the light and peace into which her precious soul has entered², and I know that you can wait in trust and hope.

When in April his health took a turn for the better, it was hoped that he could go once more to Magnolia, to the seashore he loved. Long had he been a lover of nature, a lover of beauty. And of all the scenes in the world about him that he loved, best of all was the sea with its changing moods. There at Magnolia he had sailed for many seasons in the "Sheila". Though his old friend and sailing companion, James Freeman Clarke, had gone, he dearly hoped to have at least a glimpse of the familiar view, and a taste of the salt tang before the final summons came. But a turn for the worse put a quick stop to all

¹Ibid., p.35. And the preceding short quotations are from note-books in the possession of the author.

²Warren, op.cit., p.249

the plans. On May 29th the end came. The man passed on, leaving the memory of a life which was an inspiration to all who had known him.

The life of Henry Foote was an uneventful one. Simply is it the story of a devoted pastor, quietly, modestly going about his duties with complete faithfulness. It is the story of a man wholly devoted to his profession, whose power lay not in his pulpit oratory nor in his deeds, but in his character and his over-flowing sympathy. As Warren has written:

Had the modesty of his nature allowed more determined self-assertion, his talents would have entitled him to even greater distinction than he attained; but he sought no other reward than that acquired by unobtrusive devotion to duty, and absolute sincerity of purpose. The measure of his influence is not that of his prominence as a preacher, nor of his success in maintaining and increasing a large congregation active in religious and elevating work, but rather in the example he gave of a consistent and laborious Christian life.

He was fortunate in the inheritance of a cheerful, sanguine spirit. He was gifted with a pure and impressive style; he added to an engaging manner gentle and refined tones of voice, quick and ready sympathy, a thorough intellectual training, a mature judgment, and firm and courageous devotion to the truths of his faith. He was a liberal in his views, and at the same time conservative and cautious; ready to accept without fear any result of modern scientific investigation, and yet slow to reach conclusions which required an abandonment of the strong foothold of his earlier belief. He accepted nothing without profound study and reflection, and followed no guide but that of his own honest head and heart. Theological controversy was never to his taste, and in his preaching he but rarely entered upon its domains. Sensationalism and pretence he avoided in the pulpit, as he shunned any ostentation or unreality in private or public life.....

A life like this is a permanent influence for good, reaching far beyond its short span of years, and dependent less upon ostensible outward works than upon its own simple majesty and holiness. A friend after his decease used the following words, which describe the feeling of many others who knew him: 'I had great satisfaction in his friendship and in the thought that he was so near. I think I never met him without feeling better and happier.'¹

¹Ibid., pp.249,250.

If our standards for measuring the worth of a man are no higher than that of our contemporaries, we can find little to say of Henry Foote. He was just a man who lived as he prayed, who consistently did as he would be done by, who gave himself freely and completely to all who were in trouble and in need of aid or consolation. He was just a man who knew that he had come into the world to minister, not to be ministered unto. So he lived and worked unnoticed by the multitude. His life was not like a rattling drum, as someone has said, but a sonnet.

Of him another wrote:

Gentle in his words and actions, but gentle only because he was strong enough to be obedient, strong and unswerving in his faith....he was one of whom I always thought when I thought of peace. It was the foundation of his character. By helpfulness, by obedience, and by faith, he won for himself peace, and having it, gave it to us all no matter how restless or peevish or hot-headed we were, no matter how much we doubted the good of meekness or lowliness, no matter how envious we were of him..... He was never envious; never doubting but that what his Master gained by peace he had best strive for and let those who would, gain the things of this world. And to many men, strangely unlike him, his life, so unpretentious, came as a benediction and as a proof of the matchless benefits of peace..... The new birth of peace is for youth, manhood, and old age; it is for the strong, brave and hard-workers, and not the attribute of incapacity. It is helpfulness, obedience and faith, - these three, each and all, must be there to bring peace. It is the harmony of opposing forces, and not the destruction of them. It is life, not death. It is the crucified, but still the conquering Christ.¹

He won men to him not by the force of his personality, though there was plenty of strength there; nor by the persuasiveness of his arguments, carefully thought out though they were. His appeal was of some imperceptible quality, which all unseen pervaded the lives of those who knew him. No show, no ostentation was there, but simply the beauty of his Christ-like character.

¹H. Price Collier, in the Christian Register, June 6, 1889. From a sermon preached in King's Chapel, Sunday, June 2nd.

No man can ever have been better fitted than he for his sacred office, or have won in it stronger confidence, warmer affection or more hearty gratitude. He so blended gentleness and firmness, that either might have been named as his specially characteristic trait. While his time, his unfailing courtesy and forbearance, his genial sympathy, his best services were freely bestowed, his opinions and principles were his own, and were uttered and maintained without concealment or compromise. As a writer he was distinguished for a rare purity of style, for a taste refined and delicate, yet never fastidious, and for the simplicity and ease that indicate the careful elaboration which they hide. As a preacher, his aim manifestly was not the writing of satisfactory sermons, but the meeting of the actual needs of those under his charge in their peculiar temptations, duties, and trials. Thus his sermons always had a specific purpose, and were listened to as if directly addressed to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. As a parish minister, he endeared himself by his intimate fellow-feeling, which made him seem as a member of every family in his flock, sharing their joys and sorrows as if they had been his own. He was earnestly interested in the great charities of his time, and still more so in those enterprises of Christian love which made no show and are heralded by no trumpet-soundings, but go directly, in personal ministries, to the poor, the neglected, the imperilled, - to classes always numerous in a great city, and liable to be overlooked for larger and more remote philanthropic work. In these home-charities he has been constantly the leader and helper of his people, and has enlisted in such service many who have learned under his tuition and guidance the blessedness of doing good. In his devotion to the labors of his calling, he sought no opportunities to place himself before a larger public; but that larger public gradually became aware of his pre-eminent merit and ability as a Christian minister, and has of late years looked upon him as among the strongest pillars of religious faith, social order, and general well-being. Christians of every name claimed kindred with him, and the whole community is bereaved by his removal.¹

But perhaps the most beautiful tribute of the many that were paid him was that of his father, writing in his journal:

The second saddest day of my life. This morning dear Arthur brings me the heart-breaking intelligence of the death of my precious child, Henry, - my dearest friend, my judicious and trusted counsellor, and faithful helper.... It was never more true of any one than it was of him,

¹Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, October, 1889, pp.103-4.

'The child is father of the man'.... Two such losses as those of his dearly beloved mother, so many years ago, and now that of her dear son, who was the apple of her eye, seldom come to any one person. I must go mourning through the few days, or weeks, or even months of life that may be remaining to me. May the Heavenly Father give me faith to hope for a re-union with them in that future world, to which they had the happiness to look forward with undoubting confidence. "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief."

After Henry Foote's death the parish moved with its customary leisureliness in selecting another minister. It was six years before the Reverend Howard N. Brown was called from Brookline. During that interim Mrs. Foote continued to act as minister's wife, calling, encouraging, consoling, - indeed carrying on all the work that she had been accustomed to do. The people of the church were just as devoted to her as they were to her husband. When Mr. Brown arrived to take over the work of the parish, with the grace and tact of which she was the master, she slipped quietly into the background. She had not long to live, however. On the 17th of December, 1896, she died after an eight-month's illness, aged fifty-six. To her was erected a tablet in the Chapel near the bust of Mr. Foote. On it was inscribed the words:

"The memorial of thine abundant faithfulness to this people shall be shown and with love they shall speak of thy righteousness."

And beneath the bust of her husband one reads today the words inscribed, which not only show the love of his parishioners, but as well in truth portray the character of the man:

"A man of thorough learning,
broad charity, and clear unswerving faith.
Gentle, pure, strong.
Wise in judgment,
Tender in sympathy,
Rich in holy thought and work.
Revering justice, he loved mercy,
And walked humbly with his God.
His ever-present sense of duty
inspired a life
Whose joy was to strengthen and cheer.
With victorious faith and abiding peace,

he lived among us
blessed and blessed.¹

¹This inscription was written by Charles W. Eliot and
Frances Eliot Foote.

PAGE 112 BLANK

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